

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
ATYPICAL SAMURAI IMAGE:
A STUDY OF THREE NOVELLAS BY
FUJISAWA SHŪHEI AND THE FILM
TASOGARE SEIBEI BY YAMADA YŌJI

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Japanese

at the University of Canterbury

by S. J. Albrow

University of Canterbury

2007

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	2
<i>Abstract</i>	3
<i>Author's Notes</i>	4
<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>I Historical Background to the Samurai and their Ideals</i>	11
1.1. <i>Emergence of the Samurai</i>	11
1.2. <i>Samurai Ethics during the Tokugawa Period</i>	20
1.3. <i>Anxiety and Change</i>	29
1.4. <i>Modern Adaptation of Samurai Ideals</i>	42
1.5. <i>Re-examining Samurai Traditions</i>	46
<i>II The Atypical Samurai Image</i>	51
2.1. <i>Corporate Society</i>	52
2.2. <i>Anti-authoritarian and Familial Ideals</i>	60
2.3. <i>Wealth and Status vs an "Ordinary Life"</i>	65
2.4. <i>Yamada Yōji and Anxiety at the Turn of the Millennium</i>	71
2.5. <i>The Significance of "Twilight" in "The Twilight Samurai"</i>	76
2.6. <i>Embracing Changing Gender Roles</i>	78
2.7. <i>Criticism of Ambition</i>	80
2.8. <i>Criticism of Class and Status Disparity</i>	82
2.9. <i>A New Reason For Living</i>	85
<i>III Translation of "Tasogare Seibei" ("Twilight Seibei")</i>	89
<i>IV Translation of "Hoito Sukehachi" ("Sukehachi the Beggar")</i>	122
<i>Summary and Conclusions</i>	151
<i>Bibliography</i>	155

Acknowledgments

I wish to express much gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Kenneth Henshall and Dr. Chigusa Kimura-Steven, for their time, thoughtful advice and guidance. Thanks are also due to the University of Canterbury, for providing me with financial support in the form of a scholarship during the course of my studies; and to all of the staff in the Department of Languages and Cultures, for furnishing a pleasant environment and a quiet room in which to study. Further, I am also indebted to my family and my partner for their encouragement.

Abstract

This thesis examines the samurai image portrayed within the film *Tasogare Seibei* by Yamada Yōji and three novellas by Fujisawa Shūhei, upon which this film is based. An historical outline of the evolution of the samurai and their ideals is provided as a background to the works studied, with emphasis placed on the Tokugawa period. It is demonstrated that through their depictions of samurai, the novellas and the film make a significant social commentary about modernisation and Japanese values concerning power, status and wealth in the postwar period. Two of Fujisawa's novellas relevant to this thesis, "Hoito Sukehachi" and "Tasogare Seibei," have been translated here from Japanese into English. As these works have hitherto not been translated, this will facilitate a degree of access for English readers to Fujisawa's literature, which, aside from a single existing selection of short stories, is to date available in Japanese only.

Author's Notes

This thesis follows the footnote and bibliographic format of the Chicago Manual of Style (15th ed). Japanese authors are referred to within both footnotes and the main text in surname-first order. However, where works written in English by Japanese authors are cited, the conventional Western name order will be employed. Romanisation of Japanese terms follows the Hepburn system (*Hebon shiki rōmaji*). All occurrences of Japanese words are italicised, and macrons are used consistently to indicate long Japanese vowel sounds, except in the case of place names or terms that are commonly used in English (e.g., Kyoto and Tokyo). Further exceptions to italicisation and use of macrons are certain words of Japanese origin that are now found in standard English dictionaries (e.g., daimyo, samurai, and bushido).

Quotations from Fujisawa Shūhei's novellas "Hoito Sukehachi" and "Tasogare Seibei" are my own translations; and those from the novella "Takemitsu Shimatsu" are taken from Fujisawa Shūhei, *The Bamboo Sword and other Samurai Tales*, translated by Gavin Frew (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005). Following the use of Japanese terminology within the body of this thesis, an English equivalent will be provided in brackets at the first occurrence. However, there will be times when the reverse will apply. English translations of the titles of Japanese works referred to within footnotes are provided in the bibliography.

Introduction

Owing to their pivotal role in history, the samurai have long been a significant subject of examination both within and outside Japan.¹ This historical and cultural significance notwithstanding, the global appeal of the samurai today has undoubtedly been influenced a great deal also by their depictions in various media. Indeed, since the abolition of the samurai class in the 1870s, popular reverence for these warriors and their way of life has continued almost unabated. Both film and literature have been instrumental in this regard. Adoration for the samurai can often be attributed to a popular recognition that they widely cultivated ideals such as loyalty or a never-say-die attitude. For at least some samurai this was probably true. Nitobe Inazō's 1905 treatise, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, was one specific work which postulated, and widely popularised, such a notion. *Gorin no sho* (*The Five Rings*, c. 1644) written by the monumental samurai figure Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645) is a further exposition that has received wide attention for its supposed samurai approach to life.

In relatively recent decades, television, comics and video games have added to the appeal. Samurai are sometimes depicted amidst graphic nudity and violence, and with outrageous modern hairstyles and fashion, which are seemingly more in tune with today's culture. At the risk of reducing a diverse subject to a single dimension, a common image evoked by the Japanese samurai is often that of a swashbuckling hero, similar to the military or warrior traditions of other cultures, such as the European knight or the Chinese martial

¹ In spite of the numerous historical designations for Japanese warriors, including *tsunamono*, *monofu*, and *bushi*, the term "samurai" will mainly be used throughout this thesis for the sake of consistency and in consideration of the primary nature of this study—examining and translating a number of works of popular literature and film.

artist. Today, the samurai have become icons of heroism, honour and loyalty, regardless of whether they were in actuality paragons of such virtues or not. The 2003 Hollywood blockbuster *The Last Samurai* is a fairly recent cinematic example of the glorification of the Japanese warrior. Nevertheless, in spite of the popularity of so-called samurai ideals, film critic Alain Silver suggests that there has been a marked decrease in the number of samurai films produced in the last two decades. Many of these have furnished a somewhat negative appraisal of samurai. He goes on to say that for “most of the samurai figures portrayed at the turn of the millennium, the *bushido* code offers little solace.” Recent protagonists tend to exhibit dismay with a so-called honour code.²

Aims

This thesis, then, will set out to examine several works of literature and film in which the protagonists, whilst not rejecting ethics conventionally attributed to the samurai, certainly display little reverence for them. The specific works that I will address are an acclaimed film by well known director Yamada Yōji (b. 1931)—*Tasogare Seibei* (*The Twilight Samurai*, 2002)—and three novellas by the late author Fujisawa Shūhei (1927-1997), upon which this film is based: “Takemitsu shimatsu” (“The Bamboo Sword,” 1976), “Tasogare Seibei” (“Twilight Seibei,” 1983), and “Hoito Sukehachi” (“Sukehachi the Beggar,” 1988).³ Fujisawa, who began writing part-time in the 1960s, was a prolific author of samurai fiction. He received the All-Yomimono New Writer’s

² Alain Silver, *The Samurai Film*, 241.

³ Further reference to Fujisawa’s novellas will mainly employ the literal English title given in the brackets. The dates indicate the first year that the works were published. Yamada’s *Tasogare Seibei* will be predominantly referred to by the English release title—*The Twilight Samurai*.

Award (*Ōru Yomimono Shinjinshō*) for *Kurai umi* (*The Vast Ocean*) in 1971, and two years later he was awarded the Naoki Prize (*Naokishō*) for a novel, *Ansatsu no nenrin* (*Annals of Assassination*). From 1974 he wrote full time through until his death in 1997, at the age of 69. The popularity of Fujisawa's works, most of which are set in the Tokugawa period, was also informed by the television dramatisation of many of his stories throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Recognition of the cultural importance of Fujisawa's writing has additionally led to the recent English translation of a small collection of his novellas.⁴

Yamada Yōji directed his first film, *Nikai no tanin* (*Stranger Upstairs*), in 1961. Only eight years later he launched the first installment of a 48-episode-long series—*Otoko wa tsurai yo* (*It's Tough Being a Guy*)—which soon became a household name within Japan.⁵ To date, Yamada has directed over 80 films and has received numerous awards over the course of his career. His adaptation of Fujisawa's novellas into *The Twilight Samurai* in 2002 represented his first attempt at a samurai drama. Nevertheless, this film was a box-office success and it has received acclaim at several awards ceremonies, including twelve accolades at the 2003 Japan Academy Awards (*Nippon Akademishō*), and a nomination for Best Foreign Language Film at the US Academy Awards in 2004.⁶

⁴ This collection, translated by Gavin Frew under the title *The Bamboo Sword and other Samurai Tales* (2005), forms part of the Japanese Literature Publishing Project, which is run by the Japanese Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

⁵ Yamada directed 46 of the 48 films, which spanned 1969 through 1995 and are more commonly known as the *Tora-san* series after the name of the lead character.

⁶ *The Twilight Samurai* also received prizes at international awards ceremonies in Berlin, Montreal and Hawaii.

In recent years, particularly since his death in 1997 and undoubtedly owing to the success of this film, Fujisawa's literature is experiencing a boom in popularity. The appeal of these works, which as noted depict a somewhat atypical samurai image, begs several questions: what is the reason for the portrayal of samurai who are indifferent to feudal ideals; and why are these particular works (the film and the novellas) so esteemed? I argue in this thesis that, whilst set in the Tokugawa period, the works make a significant comment about modern Japanese society. More specifically, both Fujisawa's novellas and Yamada's film appear to subtly criticise certain facets of Japan's postwar modernity, including materialism, economic ambition, the authoritarian nature of Japan's corporate culture, and the related notion of the corporate warrior, often considered emblematic of feudal values. Additionally, I read the setting of Yamada's *Twilight Samurai* in the Bakumatsu period (1853–1868) as providing a general parallel with Japan at the turn of the millennium, widely considered to be both a time of transition and of much anxiety.

Although academic studies in Japanese on the works of Fujisawa Shūhei and of Yamada Yōji are relatively common, there are few which examine Yamada's film, *The Twilight Samurai*, together with the original works of Fujisawa upon which it is based.⁷ Furthermore, aside from casual film reviews, to the best of my knowledge there has not been a study published in English with this approach, moreover, in reference to modern society. Other than *The Twilight Samurai*, Yamada Yōji's films have been studied in the West for quite some time. However, there is a dearth of information in English on Fujisawa Shūhei or his novellas. The aforementioned collection of translated

⁷ Two notable exceptions are Kōzu Kunio, *Tasogare Seibei no ningenzō* (Tokyo: Kadensha: 2004); and Yoshimura Hideo, *Yamada Yōji X Fujisawa Shūhei* (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 2004). Yoshimura focuses more on comparing Yamada Yōji with Kurosawa Akira and gives little attention to the significance of the *The Twilight Samurai* to Japanese society today.

short stories includes only one of the three novellas to be studied within this thesis: *Takemitsu shimatsu*. However, the two remaining original works—“Tasogare Seibei” and “Hoito Sukehachi”—have yet to be translated. Thus, by providing these translations within this thesis, I believe that this could make a contribution to a wider study of the author and his literature. The significance of studying these works is further demonstrated by the fact that since the release of the *Twilight Samurai*, Yamada Yōji has directed two further films based upon Fujisawa’s literature: *Kakushi ken: Oni no tsume* (*The Hidden Blade: The Devil’s Claw*), released in 2004; and *Bushi no ichibun* (*A Warrior’s Honour*), two years later in 2006. In 2005, Kurotsuchi Mitsuo directed *Semi shigure* (*Shower of Cicadas*), based upon Fujisawa’s best-selling novel of the same title.⁸

Structure

The present dissertation comprises four main chapters. The first of these will provide the reader with an historical background to the samurai and their ideals. Emphasis is placed upon the Tokugawa period, which is the setting for Yamada’s film and Fujisawa’s novellas to be studied here. Chapter Two subsequently introduces and presents a discussion of these works in relation to the postwar period. The focus will be on the portrayals of the samurai and what they suggest about modern Japan. The novellas and the film will be examined separately for several reasons: to facilitate discussion of the works relative to the specific time when they were created—the novellas were first

⁸ *Kakushi ken: Oni no tsume* drew inspiration from Fujisawa’s novella of the same title and also *Yuki akari* (*The Gleam of Snow*, 1979) from his *Kakushiken kōkageshō* (*Hidden Blade, Lonesome Warrior Selection*, 1981) collection of short stories. *Bushi no ichibun*, released with English subtitles as *Love and Honour*, is based upon Fujisawa’s *Mōmokuken Kodamagaeshi* (*Echoes of a Blind Swordsman*, 1978), which is from the *Kakushiken shūfūshō* (*Hidden Blade, Autumn Wind Selection*, 1981) collection.

published in the 1970s / 1980s and the film was released in 2002; and to allow the reader to understand the aspects of Fujisawa's novellas that have been incorporated into Yamada's film. The third and fourth chapters will furnish translations, from Japanese into English, of both "Tasogare Seibei" and "Hoito Sukehachi," as noted above.

Limitations

This study is not without its limitations: it focuses on only a few select works. I believe that this narrow selection, however, could contribute to a broader study of how the samurai are portrayed in relation to perceptions of contemporary society, particularly depictions which challenge entrenched ideals or address modern issues. Additionally, this thesis does not attempt to examine the literary qualities of Fujisawa Shūhei's novellas, nor the cinematography of Yamada Yōji's film: its focus is on the samurai-related themes contained within these works.

Chapter I

Historical Background to the Samurai

and their Ideals

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide background information about the samurai, their development and their ideals. I will begin by briefly outlining the evolution of the samurai up until the Tokugawa period (1600–1868). As an introduction to the historical setting of the works and translations within this study, I will thereupon concentrate on ideals or ethics attributed to the samurai and anxieties with the feudal system within the context of Tokugawa Japan. This will help to contextualise the atypical samurai image examined within the second chapter. Additionally, study of the rising anxieties of the period will lend support to my later discussion of Yamada Yōji's film *The Twilight Samurai* in particular, although many related historical issues are addressed within Fujisawa's novellas also. I will conclude this chapter by briefly addressing the adaptation of samurai ethics in post-Tokugawa times, and by touching on representations, in several works only, of film and literature, which re-examine samurai traditions. By doing so, this will further help to contextualise the works studied within this thesis.

1.1. Emergence of the Samurai

The precise origins of the *bushi*, or samurai as they are popularly known, are largely a matter of how exactly one chooses to define them. Although it is possible to examine social, economic or martial facets of Japanese warrior life, for instance, from early on in Japan's era of pre-history, a distinct warrior class and culture is generally considered to have emerged during the Heian period

(794–1185). A conventional starting point to discuss their development, nevertheless, is from the early eighth century, when Japan's *ritsuryō* (penal and administrative codes) were promulgated.¹ At this time, Japan's governing aristocratic court sought to curtail the increasing power of local clans and to bring the people and land under a greater degree of centralised control. The *ritsuryō* stipulated regulations for the established *handen shūju* (field allotment) system: paddy fields were allocated to the populace as a basis upon which various state taxes—land and produce taxation and corvée labour—could be paid to the court.² Playing on the minds of state officials since the seventh century was a perceived threat of foreign invasion from the Asian continent. Thus, the *ritsuryō* also provided for a national conscript army. Peasants were posted as palace guards (*eiji*), as border defence guards (*sakimori*), or most often in provincial regiments (*gundan*) as regular soldiers (*heishi*) throughout Japan.³

In contradistinction to the original goals of the *ritsuryō*, however, modifications to the *handen shūju* system eventually contributed to the erosion

¹ The first of the *ritsuryō* codes, the *Ōmi ryō*, were actually created in 668. However, mention of the codes usually refers to the *Taihō ritsuryō* (promulgated 702) or the *Yōrō ryō* (promulgated 718). On the origins and environment under which these codes were first created, see Bruce Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform: The Emergence of the Ritsuryō State." On the *ritsuryō* in general, see Torao Toshiya, "Nara Economic and Social Institutions," 415–452; and Bruce Batten, "Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From Ritsuryō kokka to Ōchō kokka," 103–134.

² The *Yōrō* Codes stipulated that all those over six years of age would receive land dependent on social position and sex. Male commoners received an area of two *tan* (2,300 sq. m); female commoners received two thirds of that received by a male; male slaves, one third as much as a male commoner; and female slaves, one third as much as female commoners. See Torao Toshiya, "Nara," 416–417; and Bruce Batten, "Provincial Administration," 107–108.

³ Torao, "Nara," 431–433. Conscription was applicable to all free adult males aged between twenty-one and sixty. The *Yōrō* Codes stipulated that one soldier for every three able males per household be provided for military service. For a detailed examination of the *ritsuryō* military system and court endeavours to maximize its military potential from the eighth century, see Karl Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*; or William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*.

of central authority. Out of an increasing need for tax revenue and lands for public allotment, the imperial court encouraged land reclamation through several laws. The first of these, in 723, permitted temporary private ownership of reclaimed holdings, and another, in 743, legitimised possession in perpetuity.⁴ Accordingly, temples and shrines, court nobles, and governors alike vigorously engaged in the accumulation of uncultivated lands for their own financial gain. They were often granted tax exemptions on their holdings. Many religious and aristocratic landlords also gained immunity from entry to their lands by provincial policing authorities and land inspectors, which eventually contributed to the proliferation of privately governed estates known as *shōen*. These private estates undermined the *handen shūju* system and consequently the tax base of the court.⁵ Throughout the Heian period, land privatization in the form of *shōen* continued in tandem with the erosion of central control and heightened incidents of lawlessness and depredation. One scholar describes the Heian period as a “competition for wealth in the provinces amongst provincial resident elites; provincial governors; and the temples, shrines, princes, and officials of the court.”⁶ In fact, provincial governors often used their authority unlawfully for self-aggrandizement, seizing lands and illegally retaining court taxes.⁷ It was often the case that

⁴ Takeuchi Rizō, “Nara Jidai,” 39. The former law was the *Sanze Isshin no Hō* (Law of Three Generations or a Lifetime), and the latter, the *Konden Einen Shizai Hō* (Law Concerning Private Ownership of Reclaimed Lands in Perpetuity).

⁵ John W. Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, 68–69. Also contributing to the rise of the *shōen* was a tendency amongst minor landowners seeking immunities to commend their lands—a process known as *keishin*—to powerful landholders, such as nobles or religious institutions, in the capital. Once the lands had received immunity through the official channels, one of two common processes would usually ensue—the land may be returned to the former owner in exchange for tributary payment; or it might remain in the hands of the new owner whilst the original owner might be installed as manager. See, Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai: A Military History*, 14–15.

⁶ Friday, *Hired Swords*, 76.

⁷ Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*, 5–6.

high-ranking nobles would remain in the capital of Kyoto and govern the provinces in absentia through the use of deputies. However, contrary to this, many low- and middle-ranking aristocrats considered local postings as useful career vehicles and thus settled in the provinces. Within the capital they were more restricted in advancement opportunities.⁸ Often amongst the new provincial elites were scions of the imperial family who had been “shed” of their royal status. This included branches of the Minamoto and Taira, who achieved notoriety in wars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁹ The top tiers of the local governing class were commonly termed *zuryō*, and were able to utilize the prestige associated with their noble origins to furnish and maintain important connections with the central court and established local gentry.

Meanwhile, paralleling the changes in landholding patterns, from public to private, were significant developments in the court’s military policy. Although the *ritsuryō* military apparatus worked for a time, there was a lack of major disturbances requiring large-scale mobilization of peasant regiments apart from in north-eastern provinces, where native tribes called *emishi* opposed the extension of court power. Consequently, this encouraged ineffectiveness in the *ritsuryō*-established peasant army.¹⁰ Whilst wars with the *emishi* were frequent and a major concern for the imperial regime, by the mid-eighth century the

⁸ John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan 500-1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*, 122–123; and Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, 6–7.

⁹ From the ninth century, owing largely to succession issues and to the problem of financially sustaining large numbers of royals, Japanese emperors began to regularly “shed” family members of their status. They attributed them with new surnames, including Minamoto and Taira. There were several lines of the Minamoto, but those that achieved the most notoriety in the wars of the twelfth century were known as the *Seiwa Genji*, thought to have been descended from Emperor Seiwa (reigned. 858–876). There were also many lines of the Taira, but it was particularly the *Kammu Heishi* descending from Emperor Kanmu’s (reigned. 782–805) great-grandson Takamochi, who became prominent in early Heian warrior history. See G. Cameron Hurst III, “Minamoto Family,” 176–177.

¹⁰ Takeuchi Rizō, *Bushi no tōjō*, 94–95. The peasants often ended up as private labour for district officials.

threat of foreign invasion had all but diminished. Thus, a national army was largely unnecessary. With this in mind, the court steadily adapted its military policy: it sought to utilise warriors from elite families in the provinces, who had traditionally honed their fighting skills, rather than relatively unskilled peasants, to fulfil its military and law enforcement functions. An initial manifestation of change was the disbandment of the majority of peasant regiments in 792. In many regions, skilled mounted archers from wealthy provincial families were installed as soldiers, known as *kondei*. Further notable changes occurred in the early tenth century: the court began to confer provincial warriors with titles formally authorizing recruitment of private armed forces to carry out the court's own bidding.¹¹ These military developments, together with the increasing climate of disorder and land privatisation, served to encourage private arms bearing. There was a growing need for armed forces to facilitate tax collection, expansion of land holdings, and resistance to other *shōen* and provincial officials. As conflicts intensified, *shōen* managers and provincial officials alike sought to accumulate military force, which soon evolved as the pivotal means of protection and authority.¹²

The professional warriors who came to furnish much of this military force were primarily mounted archers. Many hailed from the eastern provinces of Japan, which had a solid reputation for horse grazing and for furnishing fierce warriors. By at least the tenth century they and their followers tended to form

¹¹ On this process, see Hall, *Government and Local Power*, 131; and Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan*, 36–37. According to Friday, titles administered in the provinces included *ōryōshi* (subjugation agent) and *tsuibushi* (pursuit and apprehension agent), whilst within the capital law enforcement was largely the domain of the *Kebiishichō* (Imperial Police Office). On the *kondei*, see Takeuchi, *Bushi no tojō*, 94–95; and William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, 117. Farris points to lengthy wars against the *emishi*, corrupt officials, and insufficient numbers and skills of conscripts, as reasons for the disbandment of the peasant regiments.

¹² Hall, *Government and Local Power*, 129–135.

warrior bands (*bushidan*), which were knitted together by common but self-serving interests.¹³ The subordinate warriors were usually economically dependent upon the warrior leaders in capital and province alike. They were often independently hired fighters or subordinate workers of the lands they administered. The sons of warriors often joined their fathers also. Over time these bands came to form large complex networks of cooperation.¹⁴ Numerous revolts presented opportunities for the aforementioned Minamoto and Taira clans, in particular, to acquire central and local military assignments on behalf of the court, enhancing their military prominence and prestige. Ultimately, these warriors utilized their military might to gain greater control over lands and increase their wealth accordingly.

By the eleventh century, hereditary warrior houses had evolved and a distinct social status, culture of honour, and collective identity were becoming manifest amongst the samurai.¹⁵ The archetypal medieval warrior was a mounted archer. In battle his competitive spirit and endeavours to maintain honour were predicated upon his desire to uphold or enhance the reputation of his warrior house or lineage.

Much of the received image today of samurai of the Heian period and beyond stems from a literary genre described as *gunkimono* (war tales). This genre flourished from the tenth through seventeenth centuries and detailed the exploits of warriors from these times. One of the most well known of the

¹³ Takeuchi Ritzō, "The Rise of the Warriors," 648–649.

¹⁴ Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, 39–41.

¹⁵ Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, 47–50. See also Ishii Susumu, "The Formation of Bushi Bands (Bushidan)," 10. Ishii points out that the central government of the eleventh century obligated provincial administrations to provide registers of *tsunamono* (warriors). He states that this is evidence of their distinct status as warriors.

gunkimono is the *Heike Monogatari* (*Tale of the Heike*), an account of the Genpei War (1180–1185) in which the Minamoto and Taira clans fought for supremacy in the late twelfth century. Similar to other tales in this genre, the *Heike Monogatari*, whilst based upon true events, contains numerous embellishments and often portrays loyal and courageous warriors, who partook in honourable, formalized warfare. Accounts of warriors announcing their name (*nanori*), pedigree and feats prior to battle are common in the war tales.¹⁶ In reality, however, surprise attacks, pragmatism and an any-means-necessary approach most often took precedence over concerns for fair play or set rules of engagement amongst medieval Japanese warriors.¹⁷ Less honourable images of warriors were also depicted. For instance, the tenth-century war tale, *Shōmonki* (*Record of Masakado*), describes the style of warfare of a dissident governor, Taira no Masakado: “Masakado razed all the houses ... of his enemies' followers. Some people who had been hiding ... were unable to escape. Others who had fled their burning dwellings recoiled in fright at the sight of flying arrows and plunged back into the flames, screaming and weeping...”¹⁸ Obviously this does not accord well with an image of honourable warfare and brave warriors.

¹⁶ Examples of warriors proudly announcing their names are most common in tales depicting battles of the twelfth century, such as the *Hōgen* and *Heiji* conflicts and the Heike War. For a discussion of samurai depictions within these tales, see Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*.

¹⁷ Karl Friday, “Valorous Butchers: The Art of War during the Golden Age of the Samurai,” 8–10. Friday states that this approach was natural because both sides used the same weapons and similar systems, and that the nature of the warrior’s objectives—to capture or to kill—would have been difficult in the absence of surprise.

¹⁸ Judith Rabinovitch, *Shōmonki: The Story of Masakado's Rebellion*, 14–15. The characters for *Shō* and *mon* represent the Sino-Japanese readings of *Masa* and *kado*. Masakado was a governor who rebelled against the authorities, seizing control of several provinces in the east before his revolt was eventually pacified. This tale demonstrates the existence of warrior bands as early as the tenth century.

The political influence of the samurai steadily increased in relation to that of the aristocratic court. After achieving victory over the Taira in the *Genpei* War, the leader of the Minamoto, Yoritomo, established the first military government or *bakufu* (lit. tent headquarters) at Kamakura in 1185. Kamakura was chosen largely to avoid undue influence from the court in Kyoto. The institution of the *bakufu* marked the advent of seven centuries of warrior rule. Relationships between master and vassal warriors at this time were effectively contractually based: economic reward, usually in the form of land rights, was generally provided to vassals in exchange for military service. Through their shared experiences fighting wars, some warriors formed extremely personal bonds and relationships with their masters. However, disloyalty and defections were also common. According to Thomas Conlan, during the fourteenth century the concept of loyalty between bushi and their masters was actually more akin to the notion of service, accommodating a considerable degree of autonomy.¹⁹ Thus, defection at that time was not necessarily regarded as a disloyal act.

From around the mid-fifteenth century, Japan became embroiled in over a century of almost continuous internecine warfare amongst provincial military lords, or daimyo, vying for supremacy. The success of these warlords was largely dependent upon securing the loyalty of their vassals, whose self-serving interests commonly transcended personal loyalties. Before and during this Sengoku (Warring States) period, as it is known, a number of daimyo created maxims (*kakun*) and house laws (*kahō*) for their retainers or family members, often advocating loyalty and certain standards of moral conduct. An example is the *Imagawa Letter* (*Imagawajō*), which was written by an

¹⁹ Thomas Conlan, "Largesse and Limits of Loyalty in Fourteenth Century Japan," 39–42.

influential general, Imagawa Ryōshun (1325–1420), as guidance for his younger brother.²⁰ This document's prescription included learning both military and scholarly arts, and remembering the “cardinal virtues of human-heartedness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and good faith.”²¹ Ensuring the loyalty of one's retainers was deemed “the most important thing” and, thus, it was often “necessary to reward them.”²² The *Imagawa Letter* subsequently came into broad use, and in the Tokugawa period it was established as a school text.

The Sengoku period continued until a concerted process of reunification resulted in the pacification of the country around 1600. This process was carried out by three successive warrior leaders: Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616).²³ Ieyasu's emergence as the dominant military power in Japan hailed a period of Tokugawa rule that was to last through until the Meiji Restoration in 1868. His hegemonic position was officially ratified in 1603, when he was conferred, by the reigning Emperor Go-Yōzei, with the title of shogun. Effectively, the Tokugawa shogun stood at the head of approximately 260 daimyo, who administered semi-autonomous domains (*han*), and also direct retainers of the shogunate known as *hatamoto* (bannermen) and *gokenin* (housemen).²⁴ These

²⁰ For details of the Imagawa Letter, I have referred to Carl Steenstrup, “The Imagawa Letter: A Muromachi Warrior's Code of Conduct Which Became a Tokugawa Schoolbook,” 295–316.

²¹ Ibid., 312.

²² Ibid., 313.

²³ Although pacification is generally considered to have been attained in 1600, Ieyasu still had a major adversary—Toyotomi Hideyoshi's heir, Hideyori. The Tokugawa defeated Hideyori in the Battle of Osaka in 1615.

²⁴ Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 16–18. The daimyo were further classified into different groups—*fudai*, *tozama* and *kamon*. The *fudai* consisted of those who had had been close allies to Ieyasu in the sixteenth century, the *tozama* were amongst those who had opposed him and the remaining

direct vassals numbered approximately 5,000 and 20,000 respectively. Lower in the hierarchy were minor vassals, accounting for the majority of the samurai, who were under the shogun directly and the various daimyo. The samurai comprised almost six percent of Japan's population and staffed most of the administrative positions in what is known as the *bakuh* system (from *bakufu* and *han*). Rule was predicated upon a concept that is sometimes referred to as "rule by status." Their class system, best known as *shinōkōshō*, was based on a Confucian construct and organized according to four primary moral divisions of labour in the order of samurai, peasants, artisans and merchants.²⁵ There were also other minority groups, as well as the emperor and nobles of the Imperial Court. According to their status, the samurai possessed the moral and legitimate rights to rule. In contrast to the preceding centuries, warfare (excluding peasant rebellion) was nonexistent for most of the Tokugawa period, a factor that effectively encouraged the steady transformation of proud warriors into bureaucratic pawns of the feudal system.

1.2. Samurai Ethics during the Tokugawa Period

During the Tokugawa period, influential samurai struggling to reconcile their military heritage with the onset of peace began to codify and disseminate ideals throughout society. Dissemination was facilitated on a broader scale than the house codes and regulations of the decentralized political structure

group consisted of *daimyo* from minor branches of the Tokugawa family. In practice the number of domains fluctuated, but 260 is considered the average.

²⁵ John W. Hall, "Rule By Status in Tokugawa Japan," 44; and Douglas Howland, "Samurai Status, Class and Bureaucracy," 355–356. Moral superiority was set forth as follows: Officials were at the top because they represented the sovereign in governance, peasants maintained society through working the lands, artisans manipulated the land's resources for human benefit, and merchants fulfilled the needs of people through making goods available; Below these primary divisions there were also groups known as *eta* (filthy) and *hinin* (non-humans), who were (and whose descendants still are) discriminated against owing to certain occupational associations with 'impure' work such as animal slaughter and leather work.

and warfare of the Sengoku period. This was undoubtedly owing to several factors, including national reunification, Tokugawa *bakufu* policies of centralised control, the promotion of education, and increasing literacy.²⁶ Ideals of this period have greatly contributed to the salient image of the samurai—of loyal and devoted warriors, who considered death to be an inevitable if not desirable facet of their existence—that is often constructed today. I will now discuss the significance of ideals in the context of Tokugawa Japan in order to facilitate a later examination of the samurai portrayal within Fujisawa Shūhei’s novellas and Yamada Yōji’s film *The Twilight Samurai*.

The preservation of social and political order was of primary concern to the leaders of Japan’s reunification. Tokugawa Ieyasu, in similar fashion to Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi before him, sought to gain acceptance of his political rule over society by deifying himself and legitimizing his authority through religious philosophies.²⁷ Evidence of this can be seen in *Ieyasu’s Testament*, the *Tōshōgū goikun* (*Testament of the Deity Shining in the East*).²⁸ This testament articulated a relationship between legitimate rule and an extant Confucian concept of the *Way of Heaven* (*Tendō*), which was partly influenced by Shinto and Buddhism also. As per *Ieyasu’s Testament*, warrior rule was said to embody adherence to *Tendō*, to which Ieyasu himself was merely an obedient subject. The *Testament* also stated that loyalty towards one’s lord was the “cardinal virtue” expected of vassals. The Way of the Warrior, as adherence to the Way of Heaven, was a necessary means of

²⁶ During the Tokugawa period, domain schools were established for the education of samurai children, and private schools were sometimes run by merchants. As the period wore on education became more available for the peasants also. See Kenneth G. Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*, 62.

²⁷ Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680*, 60–61.

²⁸ Herman Ooms, “Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem,” 46–47; and Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 66–69. Ieyasu’s testament was published anonymously and promoted during the reign of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu (reigned. 1623–1651).

destroying evil and creating a righteous society.²⁹ It was guided by the fundamental virtues of *jihi* (benevolence) and *shōjiki* (straightforwardness), which were emblemized respectively by the sword and the jewel. In this way, military rule called for absolute loyalty and was masked in the guise of righteous and divine virtues necessary for a stable society.³⁰

In 1615 Ieyasu promulgated a law code known as the *Buke shohatto* (Laws for Military Houses). The code emphasized strict control on samurai mobility and loyalty to the Tokugawa regime, and was occasionally revised by successive shoguns. Additionally, the laws encouraged not only military (*bu*) pursuits but also education and learning (*bun*), which *bakufu* officials viewed as being highly congruent with the desired moral and efficient military administration: “From of old the rule has been to practice ‘the arts of peace on the left hand, and the arts of war on the right’; both must be mastered.”³¹ The shogun also obligated daimyo to concede to loyalty oaths. There was much inducement for them to remain loyal and adhere to the system: in the first half of the seventeenth century more than 200 daimyo had their domains confiscated, whilst many conversely benefited from domain expansion.³² Most daimyo similarly compelled loyalty oaths upon their retainers. This was likely influenced by the impersonal nature of loyalty to one’s lord, which was predicated upon a sense of obligation inherent in the feudalistic lord-vassal

²⁹ The Way of the Warrior, referred to as *budō* in *Ieyasu’s Testament*, seems to suggest the samurai’s military skill and should not be confused with the codified set of morals which is popularly known as bushido. Bushido will be discussed subsequently within this chapter.

³⁰ Herman Ooms, “Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem,” 46–47; and Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 66–69. Japan’s three divine symbols—the sword, the jewel, and the mirror—are represented respectively by the divine Shinto principles of benevolence, straightforwardness and wisdom.

³¹ Ryusaku Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 335–336. A full English translation of these laws is provided in this work.

relationship. Retainers were effectively provided a stipend on the premise that they would serve their master faithfully.³³

Thus, the nature of loyalty was largely contractual as it had been in pre-Tokugawa times. Nevertheless, unconditional loyalty was to be espoused by many. The economic-based relationship was cause for lament by Confucian scholars such as Kumazawa Banzan (1619–1691), who advocated a return to relationships based on personalized loyalty. Banzan and others believed that such unconditional ties had predominated in the late medieval period. Considering the official emphasis on loyalty by the Tokugawa *bakufu*, it is little wonder that this ideal is so closely associated with the samurai, regardless of whether they were exemplary of it or not. In any event, we will later see that opinions on what comprised ideal loyalty were not always in agreement.

Confucianism was a major influence on Tokugawa governance and was instrumental to learning. Neo-Confucianism, in particular, became a significant element of thought during the period and its scholars came to widely articulate ethical and moral standards for warrior rule. At its foundations were the philosophies of Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi), a twelfth-century Confucian scholar. Zhu Xi's teachings placed importance on the principle of reason (*ri*), which was concerned with the correct relationships between all things in the universe. Particularly pertinent to the *bakufu* was the sense of obligation and loyalty prescribed in the "Five Relationships" between father and child, husband and wife, ruler and subject, friend and friend, sibling and sibling.³⁴ Notable for his role in spreading neo-Confucianism was Hayashi

³² Henshall, *A History of Japan*, 55.

³³ Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, 34–35.

³⁴ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 36.

Razan (1583–1657), a scholar who entered the service of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1605 as a legal advisor. In 1630, he obtained financial backing from the *bakufu* and established a neo-Confucian academy, commonly referred to as the Hayashi School. Razan rationalised the samurai's learning of both civil (*bun*) and military (*bu*) pursuits. He stated that both were indeed necessary, recognizing that military victory was dependent not only on martial ability but also on knowledge of strategy. Thus, he encouraged intellectual learning and moral rule: “A man who is of inner worth and upright conduct, who has moral principles and mastery of the arts is also called a samurai. A man who pursues learning too is called a samurai.”³⁵

Alongside neo-Confucian influence, several other schools of thought emerged that promoted ideals amongst the samurai. One such tradition was *Kogaku* (The School of Ancient Learning). This doctrine stressed the importance of direct understanding of Confucian texts as studied by Confucius and Mencius rather than the later interpretations of Zhu Xi. The school produced several influential thinkers including Yamaga Sokō (1622–1685) and Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728). Yamaga had been a student of Hayashi Razan, and later served as an instructor of military science and Confucianism in Edo. He is often credited with having first codified a set of general ethics of the samurai, which were subsequently referred to as bushido (The Way of the Warrior). Yamaga looked to the *Analects* of Confucius, and extracted ideals including loyalty, honesty, and trust. In his view, these morals were originally nurtured by humanity, and evidence for this was abundant throughout Japanese history. He believed (perhaps somewhat mistakenly) that historically the samurai had widely cultivated such virtues; thus, he applied the term *shidō*, the way of the

³⁵ Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. 355–356.

samurai, to his written corpus of ethics. In fact, he considered the Sengoku period to have been a long-fought process of ethical consolidation.³⁶ Yamaga's works, including *Shidō* (*The Way of the Samurai*) and *Bukyō* (*The Warrior's Creed*), demonstrate much concern for the correct role of the samurai in times of peace. This suggests that such concern was a well-recognised dilemma amongst their class. For Yamaga, it was paramount to know one's function as a samurai—to loyally serve one's lord, rule as a moral exemplar for the other status groups, and be constantly prepared in terms of military skill.³⁷

In other words, Yamaga advocated both the pursuit of military arts and the achievement of high moral standards. Peter Nosco has remarked, with regard to the waning need for the martial skills of the samurai in Tokugawa times, that the “codification by Yamaga Sokō...of the centuries-old [*sic*] martial code of bushido was itself an indication of the fossilization of the samurai class in an age that had less need for its services.”³⁸ Today, much has been written on the subject of bushido as a “universal” code for the warrior class. However, contrary to popular belief, as G. Cameron Hurst III discusses, there was no single universal code that the samurai of any period ascribed to.³⁹ Hurst highlights that bushido as a so-called code espousing ideal conduct for warriors was merely expressive of common Confucian themes, such as loyalty or obedience. Even during the Tokugawa period, Hurst states, bushido did not

³⁶ Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka*, 30–31. Although Najita uses the term “*bushido*,” this word was only later applied to Yamaga's writing, which referred to “*shidō*.”

³⁷ Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 394–400.

³⁸ Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth Century Japan*, 33. Although Nosco states “centuries-old code of bushido,” the concept of bushido as a single code was not centuries old in Yamaga Sokō's time. Refer to Footnote 47, below. Nevertheless, Nosco's point concerning the relationship between peace and ethics is just as valid.

³⁹ See G. Cameron Hurst III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal,” 517.

gain anything like the popularity that it acquired in post-Tokugawa times.⁴⁰ Bushido, as it is popularly known today, is considered largely a product of the Meiji era and after; thus, I will discuss it further within that context later in this chapter.

A further influential proponent associated with the *Kogaku* tradition was Ogyū Sorai, who was appointed as an advisor to the *bakufu* in the early eighteenth century. Sorai advocated that samurai rule over the other class groups by nourishing devotion and virtue. This, he believed, had been the way of the ancient rulers of China.⁴¹ Unlike Yamaga, however, he did not seek to ground his beliefs on the premise of Japanese history and kept ancient Chinese rule as the model. Sorai, like many scholars of the period, addressed the inherent tensions of loyalty in relation to the samurai—to whom it was due and how it ought to be applied under the Tokugawa regime. The well known incident of the Forty-Seven Rōnin, or master-less samurai, stimulated much discussion of this issue. In summary, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, forty-seven *rōnin* plotted and carried out the murder of Lord Kira, a senior official of the *bakufu*. This assassination was an act of revenge, which had been provoked by an incident involving their former lord, Asano, two years earlier. Asano had been affronted by Kira, and flying into a rage he had stabbed him inside the shogun's castle at Edo. Thereafter, Asano—primarily because he had violated the law by drawing his sword inside a castle—was commanded to commit *seppuku* (ritual disembowelment), and his domain of Akō was confiscated. The loyal retainers who avenged his death were also ordered by the *bakufu* to

⁴⁰ G. Cameron Hurst III, "Death, Honor, and Loyalty," 514. Hurst points out that an early seventeenth-century military treatise, the *Kōyō gunkan*, is regarded as the first work to refer to actual warrior conduct as bushido.

⁴¹ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 37.

commit *seppuku*. This story generated a great deal of academic interest during the Tokugawa period, reinforcing the ambiguities surrounding the loyalty ideal. Sorai, for instance, concluded to the effect that whilst the actions of the *rōnin* were righteous and that they had fulfilled their duties to their lord, they had nevertheless committed an offence under Tokugawa law—partaking in a private vendetta—and should be punished accordingly. In his view, private matters could not take priority over matters of public order. Some scholars considered that the *rōnin* had acted contrary to samurai values by giving themselves up to the *bakufu* without a fight, whilst others emphasized that by regarding their own lives as secondary to the obligation they owed their lord, the *rōnin* had acted as righteous exemplars of samurai tradition.⁴² This story was later popularized in the form of puppet drama and kabuki (in modern times, in film and television also), contributing greatly to notions of absolute samurai loyalty.

A noteworthy articulation of samurai ideals is to be found in a work entitled *Hagakure* (Hidden in Leaves), which was compiled between 1710 and 1716. This work is attributed to a retired samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719), who seemingly struggled with the predicament of living in an age where absolute loyalties to one's lord were largely a phenomenon of an idealised past.⁴³ Yamamoto wished to commit *junshi* (to loyally commit suicide following one's master's death) after his own master, Nabeshima Mitsushige, died in 1700. However, this act had been prohibited both within his clan and in a 1664 revision of the *Buke shohatto*. Thus, effectively denied

⁴² Catharina Blomberg, *The Heart of the Warrior: Origins and Religious Background of the Samurai System in Feudal Japan*, 167–176. Blomberg provides a detailed explanation of the views of Sorai and other scholars in the aftermath of the vendetta.

⁴³ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of Samurai*, trans. William Scott Wilson.

an honourable death, Yamamoto elected to live the life of a monk. *Junshi* is widely discussed in regard to samurai ethics and, although evident from medieval times, was particularly common in the early Tokugawa period. According to Eiko Ikegami, this owed largely to the samurai's loss of a forum to exhibit violence amidst the controlled social and political order of the *bakufu*.⁴⁴ In any event, the practice prompted enough concern that the *bakufu* officially prohibited it.

Yamamoto, like many other samurai, struggled to reconcile the dilemma of his military heritage with the reality of having little opportunity to demonstrate his battle-worthiness. *Hagakure* addresses his views of ideal conduct. He emphasized absolute loyalty and devotion in the lord-vassal relationship, envisaging highly personal ties that were free of contractual obligations or reward. His adoration for perceived warrior conduct of the past led him to encourage the cultivation of a mentality whereby samurai should study the idea of death every day. In his view, a resolve to throw oneself into death without a second thought was not merely a sufficient but a requisite quality for samurai. Perhaps the most well known statement in *Hagakure* is "the way of the samurai is found in death."⁴⁵ Ikegami explains this in the context of a Tokugawa law, *kenka ryōseibai* (punishment for both parties of a dispute), whereby individuals who became involved in private quarrels or fights would face the death penalty regardless of who the instigator was. Death, she concludes, in one form or another, was the usual outcome of a fight.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ikegami, *Taming of the Samurai*, 218. Ikegami points out that pre-Tokugawa examples of *junshi* were usually apparent only after a *bushi*'s master had been killed in battle.

⁴⁵ Yamamoto, *Hagakure*, 17.

⁴⁶ Ikegami, *Taming of the Samurai*, 280.

Also in the early eighteenth century, Daidoji Yūzan (1639–1730), a student of military science, wrote a well known corpus of ideals titled the *Budōshoshinshū* (Collection for Beginners in Warrior Ways).⁴⁷ Imbued with concerns over the waning morale of samurai amidst rising consumption and sustained peace, *Budōshoshinshū* is considered to have been widely read by samurai throughout the Tokugawa period. The ideals it espoused were diverse, but emphasized the moral growth of the individual in relation to society. The warrior should “protect the farmer, craftsman and merchant,”⁴⁸ and should always remember “frugality, regardless of rank”⁴⁹ and “sensitivity toward the discomfort of others.”⁵⁰ Samurai were expected to be dutiful, loyal and courageous and devote themselves to martial arts and strategy. We shall see that Yūzan’s anxiety regarding samurai battle-worthiness and moral preservation was typical of scholars of the period, including Sorai, Banzan and others.

1.3 Anxiety and Change

In order to lend further support to my later discussion of Yamada’s film and Fujisawa’s novellas, this section addresses the significance of late Tokugawa anxieties and touches on important historical themes evident within the works of Fujisawa in particular. These include poverty, famine, stipend reductions, mercantilism, commercialisation, and status disparity amongst other issues,

⁴⁷ For this section I have referred to Daidoji Yūzan, *Budōshoshinshū: The Warrior’s Primer of Daidoji Yūzan*, trans. William Scott Wilson.

⁴⁸ Daidoji Yūzan, *Budōshoshinshū: The Warrior’s Primer of Daidoji Yūzan*, trans. William Scott Wilson, 82–83.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

and will occasionally be noted as they occur within the translations in Chapters Three and Four.

The Tokugawa period is often considered to have been marked by discontent that eventually came to a head in the nineteenth century, culminating in the overthrow of the *bakufu*. Factors that are commonly suggested to have underpinned this event include, but are no means limited to, the following: increasing financial woes, the rising significance of education and resultant focus on merit as opposed to heredity, opposition to the *bakufu*'s national policies and corrupt leadership. However, rather than examining the reasons specifically underlying the Meiji Restoration, for that is well-documented and beyond the scope of this chapter, I wish to point out various aspects of Tokugawa society that are believed to have contributed to an increasing sense of anxiety or uncertainty in general. Andrew Gordon highlights that by the nineteenth century one of the main themes of Tokugawa thought was a collective sense of societal disorganisation—that “things were not as they should be.”⁵¹ He explains this widespread feeling in terms of a collision between rising anxieties concerning social conditions and a relatively alien climate of fears concerning Western encroachment. Similarly, W. G. Beasley articulates the Chinese concept of *naiyū gaikan* (domestic troubles, disaster from abroad), which was exemplified by unrest in mid-nineteenth-century Japan and was popular in writing of the period.⁵² He explains *naiyū* as referring to an increasing sense of social and political upheaval brought about largely by transforming economic circumstances; on the other hand, *gaikan* pointed to relatively unprecedented fears of western intrusion. These two

⁵¹ Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 45.

⁵² W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 41. The concept is based on the idea that domestic problems would inevitably lead to external threat.

elements—domestic and foreign—provide a useful structure to examine the nature of anxiety that developed in the closing decades of the Tokugawa regime.

Uncertainty stemming from a strongly perceived threat from abroad was not vividly apparent within Japan until at least the late eighteenth century. In contrast, anxieties of a more domestic and economic nature had been building up from much earlier in the Tokugawa period. Agriculture, in contradistinction to trade and commerce, had long played the dominant role in sustaining the economic basis of the Japanese, and whilst this remained the case at the nascence of the Tokugawa regime, commercial influence was to increase substantially. Owing to a political system of the *bakufu* known as *sankin kōtai* (alternate attendance), daimyo were obligated to divide their time between the capital of Edo and the domains under their control for periods of six months or a year. Similarly, most samurai were required to reside in castle townships rather than on the land, which had been the case during much of the medieval period.⁵³ These requirements contributed in no uncertain terms to profound changes in the structure and commercial growth of society.

During the Sengoku period, the only major Japanese city had been Kyoto, the traditional seat of the imperial court. However, accompanying the enforced urbanisation of the samurai from around the close of the sixteenth century, the increasing town and city populations necessitated growth of commercial business. Smaller castle towns throughout Japan experienced rapid development, transforming into local political and economic administrative

⁵³ Similar to a practice from the Sengoku period, the wives and families of daimyo were kept as hostages. Under the Tokugawa regime, they were required to reside permanently at Edo as an additional safeguard against insurrection. See John W. Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, 169–170.

units. Meanwhile, Edo developed into a major city and the seat of politics, and Osaka became the hub of finance.⁵⁴ In the countryside, many peasants left the lands for higher incomes in the manufacturing and commerce industries, which were growing at a faster rate than agriculture.⁵⁵ Entrepreneurial farmers often chose to forgo subsistence farming in favour of greater revenue obtainable from the cultivation of new crops, including cotton, silk and wax. Cottage industries, many based on spinning and weaving, also took root amidst the rising commercial development. A cash monetary system of gold, silver and copper came into increasing use, commencing in major cities and eventually also being employed in castle towns.⁵⁶

It was not long after the institution of *sankin kōtai*, however, before the majority of domain governments began to suffer from the financial burdens of the Tokugawa regime. Adherence to the *sankin kōtai* system was a major expense for the daimyo and domain administrations. It involved the cost of travelling to Edo with numerous retainers, maintaining one or more residences there, and supporting the daimyo, his family and retainers and servants. Furthermore, frequent demands by the *bakufu* for construction and development also drained the domains' coffers, as did coping with the economic ramifications of emergencies such as floods or famine. Gradually, it became common for daimyo and individual samurai to seek loans from those in the lowest of the four primary tiers of social status—the merchants—who utilised their designated and exclusive roles in society to bolster their wealth accordingly.

⁵⁴ Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 191. In 1590 only several thousand people inhabited Edo, but by the turn of the eighteenth century the city had increased in population to almost one million.

⁵⁵ Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan: 1600–1868*, 322.

⁵⁶ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 42–44. Silk and cotton were needed for the growing textile industry, and wax was produced for candles.

The domains' dire financial situations often entailed, in addition to the imposition of high taxes upon farmers, the enforced reduction of retainer stipends to bolster the treasury. This practice, known as *kariage* (loan to the domain), grew increasingly common from the 1700s. Samurai further suffered from the predicament that their hereditary stipends of rice were relatively fixed, aside from occasional changes that occurred as a reward or punishment. Kozo Yamamura argues that, on the whole, samurai incomes remained steady throughout the Tokugawa period, but the boons of urban life encouraged extravagant desires amongst daimyo and retainer alike. In turn, many lived beyond their means; economic hardship and poverty were rife.⁵⁷ Additionally, regardless of rank and income, samurai were expected to comply with *bakufu* standards to furnish swords, servants and attire appropriate for their status, expenses that no doubt had profound impacts on their standard of living, particularly for those at the lower ends of samurai rank.⁵⁸ Mark Ravina suggests that status or wealth disparity was also a well recognised issue amongst the samurai themselves and created much tension. He points out that some in the lower echelons, who formed the bulk of the samurai class, may have received an annual stipend of only ten *koku* of rice, whilst those at the very top might have received as much as 10,000 *koku*.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Kozo Yamamura, "The Increasing Poverty of Samurai in Tokugawa Japan, 1600–1868," 400–402.

⁵⁸ Kozo Yamamura and Susan Hanley, *Economic and Demographic Change*, 122–123.

⁵⁹ Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 62. A *koku* was a unit of capacity approximately equivalent to 4.96 bushels, and theoretically indicated the volume of rice required to sustain an individual for one year. It was the standard measure of samurai stipend and status during the Tokugawa period. A related term, *koku daka*, was used to indicate the total capacity for rice production of individual domains.

The insecurities of Tokugawa samurai are also thought to have varied depending on rank.⁶⁰ Generally, middle level samurai felt an increasing loss of military purpose and lack of opportunity to obtain prestigious posts owing to an oversupply of officials. As well as enforced reductions in their stipends, they were increasingly required to demonstrate ability to sustain their traditionally hereditary posts. On the other hand, although lower-ranking samurai had greater chance of promotion, their salaries were lower and rewards gained were usually not hereditary or transferable to the next generation. Accompanying the relative peace that prevailed throughout the period, the samurai were increasingly transformed into a class of demoralised and ‘civilianised’ administrators in a state of penury. They were often in debt to the financially-dominant merchants, who were comparatively free to accrue wealth and utilise their designation in society to full advantage. Ishida Baigan (1685–1744), a peasant-turned-merchant, actually established principles for fellow merchants that encouraged and rationalised financial gain. His ideas were predicated upon “honesty”, which theoretically involved consistently providing value rather than outright desire for wealth.⁶¹

Commercialisation, nevertheless, had long been regarded by many as degrading the moral fabric of society through a process of greed and material desires. Farmers and samurai alike were officially encouraged to avoid becoming involved in it. Consequently, the changing economy attracted growing concerns from many influential Confucian scholars. From as early as the late seventeenth century, academics such as Kumazawa Banzan (1619–

⁶⁰ Ray Moore, “Samurai Discontent and Social Mobility in the Late Tokugawa Period,” 79–91. Moore’s study concentrates on four domains, but he also discusses the applicability of his findings to the samurai class as a whole.

⁶¹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, 28–29.

1691) and Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) proposed solutions to what they believed to be the moral decay of the samurai and society. As noted earlier, Kumazawa Banzan considered that the separation of samurai from the lands and requirements for them to reside in castle towns ultimately led to a weakened sense of loyalty between samurai and lord. The rationale he provided was that because samurai were physically removed from the peasant class, whom they were entrusted to rule, economic reward would become the main focus of their relationship with daimyo.⁶² As we have seen, in pre-Tokugawa times also, promise of economic reward was a pivotal inducement to provision of service. It seems that for Banzan nostalgic sentiment for an idealised past was a moral dilemma that concerned the civilianised role of samurai amidst increasing commercial growth. Sorai's ideas for bureaucratic and administrative change had a similar sentiment. They included returning samurai to the lands in an effort to reduce debt and reinstate the natural order of society—with samurai as the rulers and merchants amongst the ruled. He was concerned that samurai had lost their military ability and edge amidst the luxuries of urban life and had lost touch with—and also compassion for—the rural commoner class, from whom many samurai only desired tax.⁶³

Concerns were not only apparent amongst the samurai, however. The peasantry vehemently voiced their dissatisfaction with the administrative structure. Within the countryside, the process of commercial growth informed class disparities, giving rise to wealthy landowners and poorer farmers and labourers—haves and have-nots. Some peasants chose to leave the lands

⁶² I. J. McMullen, "Rulers or Fathers? A Casuistical Problem in Early Modern Japanese Thought," 77–78.

⁶³ Ravina, *Land and Lordship on Early Modern Japan*, 131–132; and Samuel Yamashita, "Nature and Artifice in the Writings of Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728)," 162–163. According to Yamashita, Sorai was more pragmatic than Banzan because he accepted that commercial growth was inevitable. Banzan, however, sought a totally "natural" economy, free of commercialisation.

because they could not feed themselves, let alone pay the taxes imposed by local domain administrations. Many protested high taxes, unjust officials and unfair restrictions on their production. Mass protests increased throughout the period and often called for benevolence—lower taxes—from the ruling class.⁶⁴ Anxieties with the system were growing, and this was particularly evident in times of famine. The eighteenth century witnessed a number of these, adding to the sense of crisis and necessitating political and economic reforms. The financial dilemma of the ruling class and the concomitant waning of effective governance served as a major stimulus for the Kyōhō Reforms in the 1720s and the ensuing Kansei reforms of the 1780s. Both reform processes were aimed at relieving financial stress—frugality was heavily advocated—and curbing disorder amongst the populace.⁶⁵ Such an emphasis was also apparent in reforms of the early nineteenth century, which like those before them, also met with little success and compounded popular discontent.

The mounting uncertainty and dismay with samurai governance and financial depredation described thus far was made even clearer in the 1830s, at the beginning of the Tempō period (1830-44). Japan experienced a famine and crisis of unprecedented scale affecting samurai and commoner alike. The incidence of uprisings throughout Japan in this period was in the range of one thousand, and was particularly evident in the final year of the famine in 1836.⁶⁶ The majority of revolts were carried out by those on the bottom rungs

⁶⁴ Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*, 14–15. For details on the incidence of protests, see pages 74–75.

⁶⁵ Victor Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790–1864*, 14–15.

⁶⁶ Bolitho, “The Tempō Crisis,” 1–6. Bolitho points out that whilst revolts had conventionally been isolated to the village level, from the Tempō period on they were evident on a regional scale. He also gives classifications of the nature of the riots.

of the economic spectrum, who usually destroyed the granaries, houses and property of wealthy entrepreneurial landowners and merchants. Following the famine, in 1837 Ōshio Heihachirō, an ex-policeman who harboured longstanding dissatisfaction with samurai administration, attempted to organise a mass attack on Osaka to target officials—for unsatisfactory governance—and wealthy merchants made rich by the system. Although the actual revolt was put down within a day, it served to deepen the growing sense of crisis throughout Japan and ignite further rebellions.⁶⁷

Several decades prior to the Tempō period, anxieties had begun to receive impetus from a different source. In the late eighteenth century, Russia, which was expanding eastward to Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, lying north of Hokkaidō, began to request rights to trade with Japan. This was an incipient sign of “*gaikan*” (foreign troubles)—that Japan’s longstanding isolationist policy would eventually come under threat from foreign nations. Indeed, ships from other countries were increasingly sighted off the coast. Only several decades after Japan had denied Russia’s requests, in 1825 the *bakufu* mandated that all foreign ships were to be coercively removed from Japanese waters. Then, in 1837 an American vessel anchored in Edo bay in the name of repatriating castaways. However, the next day the ship was repelled by fire from batteries on the shore, an event referred to as the Morrison Incident, after the ship’s name. Several years later, news of the First Opium War (1839–1842) in China, and of Britain’s subsequent acquisition of a treaty settlement and concomitant trading rights in that country came to light via the Dutch in Nagasaki. Accordingly, fears that Japan would soon be next to experience

⁶⁷ Bolitho, “The Tempō Crisis,” 9–11.

such foreign intrusion grew rapidly to the point of crisis.⁶⁸ The samurai, whose obligations to govern the populace were historically grounded on the basis of their military heritage and spirit, were conversely dispirited. By that time, they were well aware that their defensive capabilities on an individual and a national level had, over the course of two centuries of relative peace, pared down to being nothing short of inadequate to cope with Western powers.

In 1846, the bakufu managed to stave off an attempt to open Japan to trade with the US, when a two-warship flotilla arrived under the leadership of Commander Biddle. However, the ultimate realisation of crisis came in 1853, when Commodore Perry led his fleet of “black ships” into Edo Bay and issued a series of demands. These concerned the opening of ports for trade and gathering of provisions, and the fair treatment of castaways. Perry’s military presence and subsequent promise to return again with a more sizable naval fleet, which he duly did the following year, is commonly termed “gunboat diplomacy.” The presentation of such military power served to reinforce the vulnerable position of Japan and the uncertainties that the country faced. “Unequal treaties” favouring the Americans were consequently concluded, and it was only a number of years before other nations, including Britain, Russia and France, had also sought and obtained ‘unequal treaties.’ In particular, the extraterritoriality rights that the treaties accorded to each of these Western countries were deemed humiliating and unacceptable by many Japanese. Anti-foreign and anti-*bakufu* sentiment rose dramatically as a result.

Throughout the 1860s, rapid price rises of foods and commercial goods, owing partly to foreign trade, occurred in tandem with increasing disturbance and

⁶⁸ Bolitho, “The Tempō Crisis,” 9–11.

violent riots.⁶⁹ Additionally, the arrival of foreign vessels coincided with a cholera epidemic; and major earthquakes in the 1850s in Edo and extremely poor harvests in the late 1860s can only have added to people's distress. An interesting manifestation of anxieties is seen in the infamous *ee ja nai ka* (Ain't it great!) movements across Japan that commenced in the late-1860s.⁷⁰ Waves of pilgrimages to shrines transgressed into uncontrolled revelling and hysteria, cross-dressing, dancing and singing. Mysterious amulets also appeared and the phrase *ee ja nai ka* became the seminal focus of chants. These chants often carried a serious undertone and exhibited disdain for foreigners: "Unto Japan [Nipponkoku], where the gods once descended, thereupon stones shall fall, smashing the homes of foreigners, hey ain't it great."⁷¹

Much evidence for the sense of crisis and uncertainty in the late Tokugawa period is also furnished by the writings of scholars who devoted their thoughts to the ills of society, discussed above as *naiyū* and *gaikan*. From the eighteenth century, several distinct scholarly traditions gained prominence. One of these is known as *Kokugaku* (The School of National Learning), or nativism, and is commonly associated with Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801). Motoori placed importance on looking to early Japanese texts for morals by which to rule. In ancient times, he surmised, a natural harmonious relationship had existed between subjects and the emperor, who supposedly furnished an historical link

⁶⁹ Marius Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration," 174–177.

⁷⁰ Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, 202. The movements are believed to have started in Nagoya, expanded to Tokyo and Yokohama and then headed west as far as Hiroshima. On the *ee janai ka*, see also George M. Wilson, "Plots and Motives in Japan's Meiji Restoration," 419–420. Wilson highlights the significance of the *ee ja nai ka* movements in 1867 as coinciding with marked price increases of goods including rice, further contributing to financial woes. *Ee ja nai ka* is also often translated as "who cares," or "what the heck."

⁷¹ Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, 192–193, 202. Ravina maintains that despite such lyrics, *ee ja nai ka* was not an attempt to undermine domestic policies of the domains. [Nipponkoku] is Ravina's own insertion.

between humans and gods. Noting the ineffective governance and increasing disorder of his own time, he sought in his writing to restore the direct authority of the emperor in order that the masses naturally submit to his rule. Later students of this tradition, such as Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), also reacted to social disorder. Hirata sought to console peasants in the countryside, who he believed publicly manifested their anxieties in revolts mainly because they feared death.⁷²

Mitogaku (The Mito School), originating in the Mito domain, was a further prominent scholarly tradition to address society's perils. Two notable thinkers of this school were Fujita Yūkoku (1773–1826) and his student Aizawa Seishisai (1781–1863). Fujita proposed that resolution of the apparent domestic woes and foreign threat lay in the well noted slogan, *fukoku kyōhei* (enrich the nation, consolidate the military). To him, this involved reasserting the agrarian economy, curbing trade, relegating merchants to their intended lower status, and promoting virtuous military rule.⁷³ Aizawa is noted, in particular, for his 1825 publication, *Shinron* (*New Thesis*), which received favour amongst samurai in the 1840s and later. *Shinron* addressed, amongst other things, the samurais' predicament of living on a fixed rice stipend, which was often insufficient to cover the increasing costs of commodities. Consequently, many were forced into a cycle of debt with increasingly wealthy merchants or moneylenders.⁷⁴ *Shinron* also warned of the possibility of foreign religions infiltrating Japanese society and of the moral degradation

⁷² On Motoori Norinaga, see H. G. Harootunian, *Towards Restoration: The Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan*, 28–29; On Hirata Atsutane, see H. Harootunian, "Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought," 85–87.

⁷³ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 82–83. Beasley notes that Fujita's use of the term *fukoku kyōhei* did not have the same connotations of nationalism that later become associated with it.

⁷⁴ Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology*, 30–31.

that would arise from profit-making activities such as trade with “Western barbarians.” *Mitogaku* academics argued that the emperor possessed inherent political authority over the realm, but had authorised the shogun to carry out such rule. However, successive shoguns had failed in their moral duties. They had limited both the economic and military capacity of individual domains out of self interest, which led to increasing incidence of peasant rebellions and widespread civil disturbance. *Mitogaku* scholars advocated restatement of the duties and position of those in the Tokugawa political and moral order, including the emperor, shogun, daimyo and commoners. Reverence to the emperor (*sonnō*), by fulfilling one’s domestic obligations, was necessary in order to address the external problems through repelling the barbarians (*jōi*).⁷⁵ Several *Mitogaku* scholars sought to restore imperial authority: Yoshida Shōin (1830-1859) believed that the signing of treaties with the West was an indication that the *bakufu* was fearful and could no longer act on behalf of the population. Only the emperor, he surmised, was capable of doing so.⁷⁶

Needless to say, the ramifications of the treaties and consequent relations with the West were indeed far reaching and complex. For our purposes, however, it is sufficient to point out that discontent with the *bakufu*’s pro-Western stance dramatically compounded the already-building tensions and sense of dissatisfaction with the conventional administrative structures. Amidst the political and social turmoil there was a profound sense of imminent transition. Many felt that the existent feudal structures had long outlived their efficacy and drastic changes were need. Such sentiment eventually culminated in the 1868 Meiji Restoration.

⁷⁵ H. D. Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, 32–34.

⁷⁶ H. D. Harootunian, “Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought,” 71.

1.4 Modern Adaptation of Samurai Ideals

Within a decade of the demise of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, the samurai class was formally disestablished. In 1873 a conscript army was instituted by the new Meiji administration, providing some samurai, at least nominally, with a sense of military worth. The final blow came three years later when stipends were officially done away with and the wearing of swords was prohibited.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, vestiges of the samurai tradition were to continue well into the twentieth century and beyond. One dimension of this was that ideals associated with the samurai were reconstructed for nationalistic and militaristic objectives. They were given new impetus as part of a complex process of nationwide indoctrination. For our purposes what should be noted is that the focus of loyalty altered from one's lord to the emperor, and that this ideal was universalised throughout the nation, rather than being considered exemplary of the ruling class only.

The new Meiji reformers focussed their efforts on indoctrination of moral virtue and patriotism amongst the populace at large. An 1882 document, *Gunjin chokuyu* (*The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors*), issued in the name of the emperor to the Minister of the Army, was a vital step in this direction. This official edict was carefully formulated to provide 'ethical guidance' for Japan's army and navy, calling for absolute loyalty—through military service—to the emperor. However, its values also filtered down to the civilian population.⁷⁸ *Kyōiku chokugo* (*The Imperial Rescript on Education*), promulgated in 1890, accounted for the next major step in indoctrination,

⁷⁷ Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*, 77–78.

⁷⁸ Roger Hackett, "The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (*Gunjin Chokuyu*)," 279–280.

positing that loyalty and filial piety were historically the fundamental basis of the Japanese people. Virtuous relations and benevolence were emphasised, and the emperor was placed as the supreme object of loyalty and self-sacrifice for the entire country. It should be remembered that for at least the majority of the previous period loyalty was directed not towards the emperor but to the officials of the Tokugawa state. The concept of the emperor as the focus of loyalty was not at all alien to many samurai—it had been emphasised from at least the early nineteenth century by scholars of the Mito and National Learning Schools, for instance, and imperial loyalists who carried out the Restoration. The new efforts of Japanese officials, however, took this idea to a far greater level. This ideological position of the emperor was used to instil amongst young Japanese conscripts a military spirit, grounded in an envisaged consciousness of samurai or bushido-like loyalty. Following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, for instance, the way of the warrior, bushido, along with the Japanese spirit (*Yamato damashii*) and sacrifice for the greater good (as prescribed in the *Imperial Rescript on Education*) were promoted as the reasons for Japan's victory over its neighbours.⁷⁹

Only a decade or so later in 1905, when acceptance by the West was a major concern of the new Japanese state, Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933) penned in English, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. *Bushido* is one of the best known treatises responsible for popularising the notion of a samurai code of ethics in both the West and in Japan. It has had a lasting influence on people's impressions of the samurai owing to its articulation of so-called samurai ethics, regardless of their historical accuracy.⁸⁰ Nitobe's *Bushido* articulated

⁷⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Japan*. See especially 120–121, 136, 247–248.

⁸⁰ This popularity is particularly evident amongst students of Japanese martial arts, whose websites, logos etc frequently make reference to it, often with implication of a brave warrior mentality.

seven extremely general ideals—justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, sincerity, honour and loyalty—and attributed them to a code of conduct strictly adhered to by all samurai in Japan’s feudal past. It also presented these morals as have becoming thoroughly imbued throughout the now-modernised Japanese populace. Nitobe stated his goals as follows: to discuss the origins and nature of the Japanese code of chivalry, the extent to which it pervaded society and its persisting influence.⁸¹ We have already seen, however, that a single universal code of ethics for the samurai did not exist and that many scholars espoused ideals. Nevertheless, this did not stop Nitobe maintaining that even after the influx of Western influence in the late nineteenth century, “...bushido was and still is the animating spirit, the motor force of our country.”⁸²

Over the ensuing decades, the samurai image and its association with loyalty, now directed towards the emperor, was moulded and promoted unceasingly as an ideal to live by for all of the nation’s subjects. In the 1930s Japanese militarist and nationalist sentiment was incessant, as war with the West became increasingly likely. Amidst this feeling the *Kokutai no Hongi* (Cardinal Principles of the Nation), published in 1937, was instrumental in furthering the indoctrination process. As an official Ministry of Education document, it had full endorsement and became pervasive at all levels of education and, in fact, society. Bushido was posited as embodying the innate characteristics of all Japanese. It was “the Way of loyalty and patriotism, and

⁸¹ Nitobe Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 3.

⁸² Ibid., 171. See the aforementioned work by Cameron G. Hurst III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal,” for a succinct discussion of bushido in general, Nitobe’s treatise, and the (in)applicability of its values to samurai behaviour.

has evolved before us [Japanese] as the spirit of the Imperial Forces.”⁸³ Through the text’s explicit calls for unquestionable loyalty to the nation and its divine ruler, the concept of existence for the Japanese was effectively made synonymous with self-willed death in the emperor’s name. In other words, sacrifice was their *raison d’être*. However, such devotion to the emperor was postulated not as “so-called self sacrifice, but the casting aside of our little lives to live under his august grace...”⁸⁴

It is perhaps not surprising that amidst this militarist fervour Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s eighteenth-century text *Hagakure*, with its focus on a willing death, experienced renewed popularity. It was regarded as a tool to help cultivate Japanese spirit (*Yamato damashi*) and a readiness to die for one’s country. *Hagakure* was thus used by the state to provide a source of inspiration for kamikaze pilots.⁸⁵ Considering this reconstruction of the samurai image it is perhaps only natural that following the war’s end many people attributed Japanese Imperial Army atrocities directly to the nation’s samurai heritage and to bushido.⁸⁶ However, one historian argues the inaccuracy of ascribing so-called ‘samurai ideals’ to either medieval samurai behaviour or Imperial Army conduct. Karl Friday maintains that although indiscriminate killing was often carried out by samurai in medieval times (that is, in times of actual war) to obtain a specific goal, completely meaningless random destruction and pillaging was not an established samurai tradition. Immoral conduct was

⁸³ Robert King Hall, *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, 145–146.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁵ Ken Henshall with Laurie Barber, “The Not-So-Clear Way of the Japanese Warrior: Ambivalent Images, Confusing Realities and Alien Ethics,” 19–20, 30–31. This article provides a broad treatment of Japanese warrior and soldier conduct in modern and premodern times.

⁸⁶ The classic example is Lord Russell of Liverpool, *The Knights of Bushido: A Short History of Japanese War Crimes* (originally published 1958, Cassell); See also Bernard Edwards, *Blood & Bushido: Japanese Atrocities at Sea 1941–45* (Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire : Self Publishing, 1991).

prohibited by the *Senjin kun* (Japanese Field Code) itself. Friday also states that although samurai often took prisoners of war, they usually only held them for a short time before possibly incorporating them into their own band or releasing them.⁸⁷ Regardless of the historical reality of samurai conduct, the modern nationalist adaptation of bushido is inextricably linked to the Japanese warrior or military tradition.

In the postwar period, ideals allegedly attributed to the samurai have also been equated to the mindset of modern Japanese businessmen. This has given rise in both Japan and abroad to a specific term—*kigyō senshi*, and its literal English translation, “corporate warrior”—describing an apparent warrior-like dedication. This concept will be discussed further in the following chapter.

1.5 Re-examining Samurai Traditions

As outlined in the introduction, various media including film, television, literature, and comics; and entertainment such as video games have played a significant role in the popularisation of the samurai and their ideals. However, for the most part, the portrayed image of samurai and bushido is highly stereotypical and often differs largely from historical fact. Samurai portrayals often glorify ideals of loyalty and convey a sense of nostalgia for the past. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that this is not always the case. Some works of modern literature and film, if not specifically critiquing samurai ideals and images, have at least re-examined or questioned them. There are also works that have examined modern social issues through their characterisation of samurai, often in the Tokugawa period.

⁸⁷ Karl Friday, “Bushidō or Bull? A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” 339–349.

An example of literature that takes a second look at a samurai's supposed willingness to die, for instance, can be found in a novella, *Abe Ichizoku* (*The Abe Family*, 1913), written by the distinguished author Mori Ōgai (1866–1922). Before discussing Ōgai's portrayal, it is pertinent to briefly outline an event which occurred around the time he wrote the story. This event was to stimulate a controversy over samurai ethics, similar to that generated in the aftermath of the Forty-Seven Rōnin incident two centuries earlier. Following the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912, a reputable soldier of the Russo-Japanese War, General Nogi, and his wife committed ritual suicide in front of a portrait of the late Emperor. Their act of *junshi* was immediately relayed in the media and feelings of ambivalence concerning the appropriateness of such conduct in the context of post-feudal Japan were widely expressed. Nogi's death was considered by many to be exemplary of samurai ideals.⁸⁸

Only five days after Nogi's suicide, Ōgai wrote *Okitsu Yagoemon no isho* (*The Last Testament of Okitsu Yagoemon*, 1912), which was set in the early seventeenth century. The protagonist is considered to mirror Nogi's own mentality, and the story addressed the tradition of loyal suicide in the service of one's lord. The tale portrays a samurai, who out of pure devotion was willing to do anything for his master, even kill his own comrade over a dispute concerning a piece of wood that the master had ordered him to purchase.⁸⁹ Several months later, however, Ōgai published *Abe Ichizoku*, which contrasted starkly with his previous treatment of loyal suicide. It too was set in the seventeenth century and was based on a true historical incident involving the Hosokawa clan. However, within *Abe Ichizoku*, Ōgai re-examines the act of

⁸⁸ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, 221.

⁸⁹ Mori Ōgai, "Okitsu Yagoemon no isho," trans. Richard Bowring, 15–33.

junshi and portrays it as an extremely complex process rather than being a simple matter of committing suicide out of feelings of devotion.⁹⁰ In his depiction, it was necessary for many retainers of a lord, Hosokawa Tadatoshi, to request permission prior to his death if they wished to carry out *junshi*. Furthermore, in this depiction, such requests were not always made out of selfless devotion to one's master in contrast to *Okitsu Yagoemon*, Ogai's previous treatment of the subject. Many of those who resolved to commit *junshi* in *Abe Ichizoku* had done so out of regard for their reputations. They were concerned that they would be viewed by others as disloyal if they did not do so. Additionally, some samurai requested permission for *junshi* to ensure the economic security of their families, who, following their act, would likely be treated well financially by Tadatoshi's heir.

When it comes to film, there are also examples that, whilst portraying swashbuckling heroes, question feudal traditions and depict the tensions that they create.⁹¹ The award-winning director Kobayashi Masaki (1916–1996), who stated that “all of my pictures... are concerned with resisting entrenched power...” is renowned for such a work—*Seppuku* (*Harakiri*, 1962). This film deals with a samurai who eventually comes to realise the inherent cruelty of the established authoritarian structure. The feudal system had been behind the coerced ritual suicide of the samurai's poverty-stricken son-in-law with a bamboo sword, which he wore because poverty had necessitated he sell his real one. In this portrayal, the feudal authoritarian system was presented as a

⁹⁰ Mori Ōgai, “Abe Ichizoku,” trans. Richard Bowring, 35–69; and Richard Bowring, “Mori Ōgai: A Reappraisal,” 145–157.

⁹¹ For examples of bushido satire, see even the 1930s works of filmmakers Yamanaka Sadao and Itami Mansaku, who often portrayed social outcasts in favour of gallant samurai heroes. Such portrayals are remarkable considering the rise of militarism in this decade.

comparison with that of modern times.⁹² Alain Silver describes this film as vividly “anti-feudal” in its cynicism of a loyalty-driven system. He states that all “lives and deaths in an impersonal and meaningless social order become inevitably impersonal and meaningless as well.”⁹³

The films of Kurosawa Akira, according to film critic Donald Richie, also predominantly deal with issues affecting contemporary society.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly the best known of Kurosawa’s works in both Japan and abroad is *Shichinin no samurai* (*Seven Samurai*, 1954), which was released in the wake of the allied occupation.⁹⁵ This film concerns a group of masterless samurai who are hired by villagers for defence against bandits. The film and its depiction of the samurai image have received much examination. Richie, for instance, concludes that the work depicts the emotional sympathies between men and highlights how this is destroyed by war. Patrick Crogan suggests that the work emphasised class cooperation between samurai and peasant as a means of examining “pressing questions around the nature of Japanese identity, culture, class structure and nationhood” following World War II.⁹⁶

The few works I have touched on above demonstrate that the samurai image, despite its popular nature, is sometimes used as a vehicle for re-examining

⁹² Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film: A Concise History with a Selective Guide to Videos and DVDs*, 164–165. *Harakiri* was an award winner at the Cannes Film Festival. A further work to negatively critique samurai or feudal traditions in the postwar period was *Bushido zankoku monogatari* (*A Tale of Bushido Cruelty*, 1963) directed by Imai Tadashi.

⁹³ Alain Silver, *The Samurai Film: Expanded and Revised Edition*, 47.

⁹⁴ Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, 166.

⁹⁵ *Seven Samurai* was the basis for the well known Western, *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

⁹⁶ For Richie’s interpretation see Donald Richie, *Japanese Cinema: Film Style and National Character*, 232–233; For Crogan’s review, see Patrick Crogan, “Seven Samurai,” (*Senses of Cinema*, 2000. <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cte/q/00/9/seven.html>)

historically-based ideals and also modern issues. In this sense, Yamada Yōji's film *The Twilight Samurai* and the short stories by Fujisawa upon which it is based are not entirely unique. However, it will be shown in the following chapter that they are nonetheless significant and make an important commentary on postwar Japanese society, especially at the turn of the millennium.

Chapter II

The Atypical Samurai Image

Fujisawa Shūhei, as noted in the introduction, was a prolific writer of samurai fiction, whose novels have achieved much popularity since the 1970s. Within this chapter I will examine the depictions of Tokugawa samurai within three of Fujisawa's novellas—"Tasogare Seibei" ("Twilight Seibei," 1983), "Takemitsu Shimatsu" ("The Bamboo Sword," 1976) and "Hoito Sukehachi" ("Sukehachi the Beggar," 1988)—and within Yamada Yōji's award-winning film *Tasogare Seibei* (*The Twilight Samurai*, 2002).¹ Although each of these works is set in the Tokugawa period, I see their significance as being relevant to Japan in the latter half of the twentieth century. I argue that the protagonists within these works stand as an antithesis to conventional samurai ideals (discussed in Chapter I), or more generally to the sense of authority that they embody. I will show that the portrayals appear as criticism of certain aspects of Japan's postwar modernisation, including the notion of a corporate society (*kigyō shakai*), materialism and ambition. Yamada Yōji's *The Twilight Samurai* expands on Fujisawa's works, and also comprises new issues of family and gender. Additionally, I argue that this film seems to present a parallel between Japan at the turn of the twenty-first century and the close of the Tokugawa period. When considered in the context of Yamada's views on postwar modernity and Japanese values, I will suggest that his intentions were in part to create a film that, through its promotion of familial ideals, offers a degree of solace for Japanese amidst the anxieties of today.

¹ As noted in the introduction, reference to Fujisawa's novellas will predominantly employ the literal English title given here in the brackets, and Yamada's film *Tasogare Seibei* will be referred to as *The Twilight Samurai*.

In regard to period novels, Fujisawa has stated that although conventional [early modern] Japanese values have become diverse, novels set in the early modern period can nevertheless make comments about life today.² He goes on to say that although people's lifestyles are compelled to change, emotions or true feelings are not necessarily so. Fujisawa suggests that similarly to individuals in the Tokugawa period, people in modern times have feelings of familial obligation, envy or antipathy. Thus, he concludes that period novels can question humanity in the same way that novels set in modern times are able to do so. According to Miyazawa Kentarō, Fujisawa's literature indeed examines the nature of humanity, exemplifying a concept of "permanency and change" (*fueki ryūkō*).³ In other words, Fujisawa attempts to portray what he believes are essentially unchanging human values amidst a changing world. Miyazawa further suggests that, within his writing, Fujisawa attempts to return to an ideal way of life, which was largely untainted by "diverse western thinking."⁴ As the last of the novellas in this study was first published during the 1980s, it is pertinent to review postwar Japanese society through until this time in order to understand what Fujisawa's works suggest about modern times and values.

2.1 Corporate Society

Following the conclusion of the Second World War, Japan's economy improved markedly in a relatively short space of time. In the prewar period the Japanese economy had a large agrarian focus, but following the Second World

² Cited in Ozaki Hotsuki, *Taishū bungaku no reikishi*, 2: 371; and Miyazawa Kentarō, "Fujisawa Shūhei no kindai to hankindai," 18.

³ Miyazawa Kentarō, "Fujisawa Shūhei no kindai to hankindai," 18–19.

⁴ Ibid., 18–19.

War the government steadily focussed on developing the heavy manufacturing industry. From the 1950s through until the early 1970s, Japan experienced a period of extremely high economic growth, which is commonly referred to as the “economic miracle”. In the name of raising individual incomes (and theoretically, lifestyles), Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato’s renowned “Income-Doubling Plan” of 1960 played a significant role in focusing the efforts of the populace on increasing the gross national product.⁵ Effectively, the military-oriented nationalist goals of the prewar period (discussed in Chapter One)—whereby citizens were expected to give their all for the greater good—were substituted with national goals of an economic nature. As Gavin McCormack puts it, “the need to work, accumulate, invest, develop and grow...” was prioritised during this time in the name of achieving a sense of fulfilment and happiness.⁶

As the economy steadily improved a consumer society began to emerge. Rising incomes bolstered material desires, as they undoubtedly did in many parts of the world, and certain goods came to symbolise middle-class identification.⁷ Indeed, a large percentage of Japan’s populace in the 1960s came to place themselves within this middle bracket, giving rise to a myth of middle-class equality, or *ichioku sōchūryū* (*One hundred million, all middle class*). Toshiaki Tachibanaki suggests the following reasons for this

⁵ Elise K Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, 177–179. A major objective of Ikeda’s plan had been to curb domestic opposition to Japan’s foreign policy at the time. US demand for Japanese products at the time of the Korean War was a major contributor to economic growth, which was also heavily aided by US funds as part of the American strategy in its Cold War with the Soviet Union.

⁶ Gavin McCormack, *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence*, 32.

⁷ Rising “middleclass” consumption in Japan has long been associated with set groups of three items. Whereas in the 1950s, common objects of material desire are said to have included the refrigerator, washing machine and television, by the late 1960s, the car, air conditioner and colour television were the preferred goods. In the 1970s, these in turn were replaced by jewels, overseas holidays and houses. Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 182–183; and Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking identity in modern Japan*, 120.

widespread belief: greater educational opportunities for the masses in the postwar period; and decreasing disparities in earnings between white and blue collar workers that accompanied a rise in average incomes.⁸ Government policies continued to focus on driving mass production and consumption throughout the postwar decades, and consciousness of the rising economic affluence of the nation grew accordingly. Nevertheless, questions began to emerge of whether all-encompassing economic goals led to happiness and satisfaction in the lives of Japanese, as had originally been intended and espoused by national leaders. In the late 1960s, incidents of industrial pollution afflicting the environment and in some cases inflicting disease on local communities raised awareness of the costs of high economic and urban growth.⁹ Workers pondered the social drawbacks of spending long hours for the good of both the company and the national economy at the expense of their families. At the same time, a movement emerged towards valuing home life, known as *maihōmu* (*My home*).¹⁰

Over the high growth period, a paternal ideology that emphasised the company as a type of pseudo-family had started to become entrenched within some major corporations. This familial concept had actually developed in the interwar decades of the century, when Japan's manufacturing industry had been characterised by high turnover rates of skilled staff. In order to curb such turnover, some firms had begun to offer inducements to workers: a concept of permanent or lifetime employment, and rewards and promotion based upon

⁸ Toshiaki Tachibanaki, *Confronting Income Inequality in Japan*, 69, 75.

⁹ The best known example of industrial pollution from this time is Minimata disease, which was widely contracted in Niigata and Kumamoto owing to mercury waste from chemical factories. For a work that questions the social costs of Japan's economic goals, See Hidaka Rokurō, *The Price of Affluence: Dilemmas of Contemporary Japan*.

¹⁰ Kenneth Henshall, *Dimensions of Japanese Society*, 126–127; and Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 184.

seniority.¹¹ Moreover, some companies established in-house welfare systems and sought to reduce the transferability of workers to other firms by instituting job-rotation models aimed to generalize a worker's skill and particularise his or her knowledge to one company.¹² Several major corporations also began to strongly promote the idea that individual efforts contributed largely to the success of one's colleagues. This success would in turn be reflected on to the success of the corporation, which would have significant benefits for all employees.¹³

By the late 1960s, an ideology whereby management theoretically took a vested concern in protecting the interests of their workers in exchange for loyalty and hard work had become prevalent in some large firms. What this loyalty often translated to, however, was long hours at the office or the factory. The dedication required of workers within firms was highly conducive to the national cause of economic growth. Indeed, annual working hours in Japan were well above that of many Western nations: in 1970, the difference between Japan and the United States, for instance, equated to 291 hours, or almost two months per year.¹⁴ However, one should be cautious in positing this devotion as a manifestation of deep-seated Japanese loyalty towards the company, or as an indication of Japanese work ethics. Just as was shown in Chapter One to have been the case in the Tokugawa period, the concept of loyalty was theoretically based on an understanding of exchange. Although the

¹¹ Bernard Eccleston, *State and Society in Postwar Japan*, 73. Eccleston points out that annual turnover rates within the manufacturing sector were greater than 50 percent in the interwar years.

¹² Eccleston, *State and Society in Postwar Japan*, 73; and Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Japan: The Burden of Success*, 28. Bouissou notes that inducement to remain at a company was often not as liberal in smaller corporations in the 1920s. In some instances, retention of female textile workers was facilitated by locking them into their dormitories.

¹³ Kumazawa Makoto, *Portraits of the Japanese Workplace: Labour Movements, Workers, and Managers*, 36.

¹⁴ Ross Mouer and Hirotsuke Kawanishi, *A Sociology of Work in Japan*, 72–73.

Japanese work environment has often been viewed as nurturing and inclusive—fatherly assistance for junior employees, seniority-based promotion, assurance of lifetime employment, and cooperative workplace relations—this was not necessarily the case.¹⁵ Authoritarian control over employees was often facilitated by the promotion of competition at all levels, worker solidarity was effectively reduced, and the combination of seniority-based pay and lifetime employment greatly restricted inter-firm mobility of workers. Furthermore, an individual's dependence on the company was heightened because of social benefits often provided by their employer rather than by government programmes.¹⁶ Loyalty, respect and a sense of duty were, therefore, not as absolute as is often imagined. The job satisfaction of Japanese workers during the 1970s and 1980s, in fact, suggests a sense of discontent with expectations of duty placed upon them.¹⁷

Japan's high economic-growth era continued for almost two decades, but was brought to a sudden halt with the onset of the international oil crisis of 1973. The subsequent global recession intensified economic competition, and Japanese capitalist industry carried out major changes in order to remain competitive. The previous main focus of industry had been on production of heavy machinery, but this came to take a back seat to electronics and automobiles. Offshore production was increased and many firms replaced

¹⁵ Tomiko Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labour, and Capital in Contemporary Japan," 885–886.

¹⁶ Ibid., 885–886. Worker solidarity in Japan on a national level has also been reduced by the predominance of enterprise unions (Both blue and white collar workers of an individual enterprise or workplace are members) over labour unions, organised around an entire industry or trade.

¹⁷ Henshall, *Dimensions of Japanese Society*, 126. For numerous examples of surveys in the 1970s and 1980s showing remarkably lower rates of satisfaction amongst Japanese workers than amongst their counterparts in Western nations, see James R. Lincoln and Arne L. Kalleberg, *Culture, Control, and Commitment: A Study of Work Organisation and Work Attitudes in the United States and Japan*, 60–61.

permanent workers with cheaper temporary alternatives. Employees were subjected to increasingly stringent evaluation in terms of merit and company devotion, serving to increase competition amongst individual workers. Unpaid overtime was also widely expected of employees. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the labour and management policies that were prevalent in major corporations of the immediate postwar decades became broadly entrenched throughout the range of Japanese businesses. Eventually this gave rise to what is commonly termed a corporate society (*kigyō shakai*).¹⁸ This concept of Japan as a corporate society often has different connotations. It can refer either to the hierarchical pyramid network of businesses and subcontractors, or to the practices and values embodied within the corporate structure and their effect on society.¹⁹ What we are mostly concerned with here is the latter use.

Tomiko Yoda suggests that competition based upon ability came to dominate society, affecting employee and family alike.²⁰ She states that the increasing prevalence of competition within firms had a major impact on the already stringent education system also. In line with its economic goals, the government had established a ranking system for all schools. Test scores became the major determinant of rank, as well as of a student's ability to enter schools that had a high status. Then, in the 1970s, alongside the rising focus on ability within the structures of corporate Japan, firms increasingly hired recruits directly from universities and high schools on an annual basis. The determinants of employment for these graduates included both grades and the

¹⁸ Tomiko Yoda, "A Roadmap to Millennial Japan," 644–645.

¹⁹ Terje Gronning, "Review of Makoto Kumazawa, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace: Labor Movements, Workers, and Managers," (H-Japan, H-Net Reviews, August, 1997. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=25164875914424>.)

²⁰ Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labour, and Capital in Contemporary Japan," 887–888.

status of the school or university. Consequently, this contributed to a heightened focus on education and exam results by parents and their children.

In spite of the global recession of the 1970s, Japan's economic status recovered at a remarkable rate in relation to the economies of other countries. There was still concern within Japan about the ramifications of its economic achievements: urban overpopulation, excessive construction, and pollution. Nevertheless, largely owing to its financial recovery, Japan received a great deal of international recognition that it had skilfully focussed its resources on maximizing development and economic growth.²¹ Much of this interest—notably, Ezra Vogel's 1979 classic, *Japan as Number One*—focussed on the reasons for Japan's economic success. This book, in fact, added to the bulk of writings on theories of Japanese uniqueness (*nihonjinron*), which had emerged in the late 1960s and had continued to grow in the 1980s. This genre of writing deemed cultural aspects of Japanese society to be unique, and made much of allegedly innate Japanese penchants, which included hard work and loyalty, group orientation and hierarchy. As we have seen, however, loyalty was not always as absolute as imagined. Much esteem was also accorded to the labour practices centred on lifetime employment and a familial corporate ideology.²²

In the mid-1980s, Japan signed the Plaza Accord with the United States, France, West Germany, and the United Kingdom. This agreement was largely aimed at depreciating the US dollar in relation to both the yen and the Deutschmark in order to aid the US in emerging from the recession. The resultant strength of the yen contributed to a so-called 'bubble economy'

²¹ McCormack, *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence*, 52–53

²² Henshall, *Dimensions of Japanese Society*, 127–128.

within Japan, which lasted from 1986 to 1990 and saw land and asset prices soar. The bubble era is also noted for evident rising inequality amongst the masses. Highly influential in this respect were the disparate incomes between workers of the new major industries—high technology on the one hand, and service on the other. In relation to service workers, those in the high-technology sector could command far higher incomes owing to the required skills and education within their field. The high salaries of sports stars, entertainers and new types of entrepreneurs, who flourished during the financial boom, also contrasted greatly with those in the service sector. The rise in land prices saw many owners prosper, whilst those without land felt increasingly marginalised.²³

The advent of the bubble economy also seemed to coincide with an awareness in the media of a “new species” of youth—*shinjinrui*. The term reflected the rising tendency of young Japanese to reject the single-minded work ethic of their parents and freely embrace the fruits of affluence that had come to them. There was also concern over an evident proliferation of young men who, rather than seeking permanent secure jobs, elected to hop from firm to firm through plentiful temporary positions. Such workers were called *furītā*, an amalgamation of the English word “free” and the German term “*arbeiter*” (worker). Nevertheless, the national work ethic was apparently not suffering as greatly as this phenomenon suggests. Annual working hours had continued to rise throughout the 70s and 80s, and with the dawn of the 90s the average was 2,200 per year. There was, however, a serious downside to this. A term known as *karōshi* (death by overwork) had begun to receive attention in the 1980s (and to a lesser degree continues to do so today). *Karōshi* described males

²³ Tachibanaki, *Confronting Income Inequality in Japan*, 75; and Bouissou, *Japan: The Burden of Success*, 236.

whose sudden death was ascribed to extreme working hours and related high stress levels.²⁴

As Fujisawa Shūhei's works within this study were first published in the 1970s and 1980s, I will end the above outline at this point. After discussing his novellas, I will then address Japanese society in the 1990s and examine Yamada Yōji's film in relation to this later decade.

2.2 Anti-authoritarian and Familial Ideals

In the late 1970s, Japanese philosopher Kuno Osamu commented on postwar Japan. He suggested that belief in the drive for production and profit was the predominant ideology in society and that those who challenged this ideal were deemed to be “unpatriotic” or “disloyal to the company.” Additionally, he drew a distinct parallel between the emphasis on conformity within the authoritarian structures of Japan Inc and the “ideological conformism” of the pre-war emperor system.²⁵ According to Takahashi Toshio, Fujisawa Shūhei's (1927-1997) experiences in wartime under the militarist emperor system seem to have lent an anti-conformity facet to his works. He suggests that Fujisawa's choice of protagonists represents a dislike of authority.²⁶ Indeed, Fujisawa has stated the following concerning his main characters:

The kind of protagonists who I portray in samurai tales are for the most part *rōnin*, poorly-paid low-ranking samurai, or less conspicuous second or third sons of a family. In other words, I

²⁴ Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 304–306.

²⁵ Cited in Uchihashi Katsuto, “The Lost ‘Human Country’,” (Japan Focus, 2005. <http://www.japanfocus.org/products/details/1801>)

²⁶ Takahashi Toshio, *Fujisawa to in ikikata*, 155–158.

always pick up people who are excluded from the mainstream of samurai society or those who, whilst in the midst of that society, are effectively marginalised.²⁷

The protagonist of “Twilight Seibei,” the first work that I will address, is certainly no exception to this description. Iguchi Seibei is worlds apart from any imagined sword-wielding samurai hero—a low-ranking clerk, who is nicknamed “Twilight” (*tasogare*), owing to the fact that he unfailingly returns home as soon as work finishes each day. His reason for his swift departures is so that he can complete the housework and nurse his wife, who has tuberculosis. The figure Fujisawa depicts is slightly indifferent to the expectations of society. As he trudges home, locals stare dubiously at his shoddy appearance, but he displays no emotion.²⁸ In order to earn enough money he is compelled to partake in home-based piecework (*naishoku*) each evening. A domain councillor, Ōtsuka, relates Seibei’s low status of 50-*koku* with a subtle smirk on his face. Similarly to this work, “The Bamboo Sword” presents a poverty-stricken and unkempt samurai of seemingly low social acceptance. The story describes the plight of a *rōnin*, Tanjūrō, in his struggle to obtain employment following the Battle of Osaka in the early seventeenth century. He is described as having “...sunken cheeks...[that are] covered with unkempt beard, making him appear all the more disreputable.”²⁹ The clothes that he, his wife, and his daughter wear are a “mass of darns,” and his own kimono “had been washed so often that the family crest was faded to the point of being indiscernible.” His appearance is even a cause for concern when he applies for work at the castle. The last of the three novellas in this study is

²⁷ Cited in Takahashi Toshio, *Fujisawa to iu ikikata*, 155–156. (My translation)

²⁸ Fujisawa Shūhei, “Tasogare Seibei,” 25.

²⁹ Fujisawa Shūhei, “The Bamboo Sword,” trans. Gavin Frew, 8–11.

“Sukehachi the Beggar.” Once again, the protagonist exists on the margins of society. Ibe Sukehachi is a stores worker who earns a miniscule stipend of 30 *koku*. He was “always dirty. His clothes were shabby, he rarely took a bath, and from time to time his body would reek...”³⁰ Owing to his unkempt appearance, in fact, he is belittled by other samurai and called “beggar” (*hoito*). The portrayals of the protagonists within the specific works under study, whilst subtle, nevertheless appear to challenge the ideals or expectations that authority espouses. They also evoke an image of a somewhat atypical samurai.

Takahashi Toshio maintains that rather than merely choosing not to portray the mainstream, Fujisawa tends to depict high-ranking samurai in power as arrogant or petty from the perspective of those lower down the social ladder.³¹ *Twilight Seibei* is based around a power struggle amongst the domain’s administrative councillors, who are deeply concerned with factional politics. In stark contrast to the negative image of his superiors, however, Seibei is depicted as having little interest in domain affairs. He is, as Okaniwa Noboru suggests, a modern-day “*gojikara otoko*” (*lit.* a “five-o’clock man”), who regularly finishes work on the dot and leaves before anyone else.³²

Seibei’s slight disregard for authority can be seen in Fujisawa’s depiction of the tensions afflicting this protagonist between loyalty to the clan and to his family. The tension presents itself as a parallel with the obligations of duty

³⁰ Fujisawa Shūhei, “Hoito Sukehachi,” 283.

³¹ Takahashi Toshio, *Fujisawa to in ikikata*, 155–156.

³² Okaniwa Noboru, “Aku no egakikata ni miru Fujisawa Shūhei no kosei to ‘jōai,’” 129–132. *Gojikara otoko* contrasts the work ethic of someone who finishes work on the dot with paragons of the postwar corporate work ideal, who are seemingly willing to give all to the company. Such businessmen are referred to as *kigyō senshi* (corporate warrior).

undoubtedly felt by many salarymen in postwar Japan. In the middle of the night, Seibei is summoned to appear before the councillors of his domain, and is then commanded to complete a mission under the banner of “a grave domain matter.” The mission involves killing Senior Councillor Hori, whose involvement with a rich merchant and self-serving behaviour has worsened the domain’s financial situation and debt, which came about in the wake of several disastrous famines. However, to the surprise of Senior Councillor Sugiyama, Seibei is extremely hesitant to agree to his orders.

‘With all due respect...’ Iguchi Seibei raised his bowed head.
 ‘Would it be possible for you to ask another person for the job?’
 ‘What?’ Sugiyama stared at Seibei with an ominous look on his face. ‘Are you saying no?’
 ‘If you so permit...’
 ‘Foolish man!! We have summoned you at this time because there is nobody else! Are you frightened by what you have heard here?’
 ‘No.’ Seibei shook his head. ‘It’s just that the meeting is at night...’
 ‘And so?’ replied Sugiyama.³³

Needless to say, the tension between a sense of loyalty or duty (*giri*) and personal feeling (*ninjō*) is a common theme of samurai literature, film, and drama. In this instance, Seibei, whilst not oblivious to the omnipotence of his superiors, seems entirely clear about his own duties. They lie with his wife and the preservation of his family life.

³³ Fujisawa Shūhei, “Tasogare Seibei,” 30–31.

‘I’m afraid that there is much business that I need to attend to during the evening’

‘That business would be feeding your wife and such would it not?’ Sugiyama replied with a grin. ‘I’ve heard that people call you Twilight Seibei because you do the cooking, cleaning and other things.’³⁴

Seibei continues to resist.

‘Be that as it may, the mission you have been charged with is a grave matter for the domain. It is utterly incomparable to helping your wife to the toilet. On the day, just ask someone else to assist your wife.’³⁵

Within the previous chapter I outlined the structure of Tokugawa society and the significance of loyalty to the daimyo or clan. Regardless of whether or not samurai were paragons of it, loyalty to one’s superiors was shown to be a central ideal, which dominated thought and society in the Tokugawa period. Some samurai were described as seeking an absolute loyalty-based relationship with their lord, which could even necessitate that the individual sacrifice his own life without a second thought. One may recall the emphasis on death found in Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s *Hagakure*, for instance. Such an ideology of loyalty and willing death was also central to the modern interpretation of bushido and the revival of samurai ethics by prewar and wartime militarists.

Seibei’s superiors are resolute in believing that the interests of the clan take precedence over personal needs. They exhibit an authoritarian power over him, which appears analogous to what Hiroko Takeda refers to as the “company

³⁴ Fujisawa Shūhei, “Tasogare Seibei,” 31.

³⁵ Ibid., 31.

first-ism” ideology of postwar Japanese “corporate capitalism.”³⁶ The omnipresence of the corporate society has been described within this chapter. The term *kigyō senshi* (corporate warrior) is a well known description for salaried men who devote themselves to the company. It plays on the popular (and perhaps mistaken) belief that all samurai were exemplars of loyalty and devotion. However, Seibei stands as an antithesis to such thinking. He is not a paragon of the corporate warrior, but of a domestic or familial warrior. His interests lie not with his work, but with taking care of his sick wife and also the domestic duties of his household. Fujisawa balances the struggles that the protagonist faces with an emphasis on more humanistic values. Eventually, when his superiors offer Seibei better medical care for his wife, he agrees to the mission. The image of Seibei, seemingly having little ambition, strongly contrasts with Hori, the samurai he is ordered to kill, who stands for greed and power. When Seibei does fulfil his mission and kills Hori he is offered financial reward, but refuses. Having received the promised treatment, his wife shows positive signs of recovery. That is all Seibei had desired.

2.3 Wealth and Status versus an “Ordinary Life”

The marginal image of Fujisawa’s protagonists may also be a reflection of his own emphasis on living an “ordinary life”. According to his daughter, Endō Nobuko, one of Fujisawa’s pet phrases was “ordinary is best,” of which the word “ordinary” referred to maintaining a healthy harmonious life with one’s family. He disliked showiness and elitist tendencies, and cautioned against judging others by their wealth.³⁷ These comments may suggest a rejection of

³⁶ Takeda Hiroko, *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan*, 128

³⁷ Endō Nobuko, *Chichi · Fujisawa Shūbei to no kurasai*, 199-200. Endō states that her father’s desire for a life at home contributed to his decision to become a full-time writer.

economic desires in favour of contentment. Indeed, the novelist Yamamoto Ichiriki believes that contentment with life and avoidance of money-oriented goals are some of the central lessons within many of Fujisawa's works.³⁸ He believes that people in Japan today lack discernment (*wakimae*) and do not know how to be content (*taru wo shiru*). In his view, the trend amongst many Japanese has come to be mammonism (*haikin shugi*), and although conventionally (*honrai nara*) people who worshipped money would have been looked down upon, they are now idolized and looked up to. It is clear that Yamamoto's suggestion that some Japanese today are driven by material desires is a reaction to the influence of modernity on "conventional" Japanese values. In any event, at least with regard to the works in this study, I agree with Yamamoto's position that the protagonists of Fujisawa's works counter material ambition with contentment.³⁹

The significance of financial ambition versus contentment appears in the following novella that I will address, "Sukehachi the Beggar" ("Hoito Sukehachi," 1988). The protagonist is reprimanded by the daimyo for his slovenly appearance, after which many samurai in the clan ridicule him with the nickname, Sukehachi the Beggar. His superior, Kusaka, however, takes pity on him, believing that his appearance is owing to the fact that he is a lonely widower. In fact, Sukehachi does not feel all that lonely and his unkemptness is somewhat a natural characteristic. His widower lifestyle has brought with it a sense of liberation from his late wife, Une. Hailing from a 100-*koku* family, she had constantly pestered her husband about his low 30-*koku* status. She had never gotten used to her married lifestyle and continued

³⁸ Yamamoto Ichiriki, "Wakimae wo shitte ikinaosu gokochi yosa," 172–180.

³⁹ Yamamoto "Wakimae," 176. "*Taru wo shiru*" is a shortened form of the Buddhist phrase, *Ware tada taru wo shiru* (I know only contentment).

until her death to have high material expectations. She is described as someone whom Yamamoto Ichiriki, above, might call typical of people today, someone overly concerned with the thoughts of others. Une's catch phrase was "*shusse nasaimase*" (Strive for success in your career).⁴⁰ In her view, if Sukehachi did not rise up in the world, her family would be sorry for having married their daughter off to him. Sukehachi, himself, represents an antithesis to such ambition. He is content with life and has absolutely no financial desires, in spite of his poor lifestyle. Nevertheless, his late wife's complaining had affected him. He is reacquainted with Hatsu, the sister of an old friend called Iinuma Tomonojō. Hatsu's ex-husband Kōda is unaccepting of their divorce, and when he causes trouble at the Iinmua household Sukehachi steps in on their behalf. It is arranged that he and Kōda will have a duel to settle the matter. After the duel, in which he defeats Kōda, Sukehachi and Hatsu gradually become close. Tomonojō later asks him if he would consider marrying her. However, Sukehachi refuses on the basis that Hatsu, like his late wife, is higher in status than himself: "I've learnt my lesson about status differences in marriage."⁴¹

It seems significant that this tale was originally published in 1988, during the so-called bubble period. As has been discussed, at this time there was an increasing sense of wealth disparity amongst many Japanese, who for several decades had gotten used to a myth of middle class consciousness. Fujisawa's treatment of status significance versus contentment appears as criticism of the apparent rise in inequality of the times. The issue of financial ambition is again raised when Sukehachi is ordered to kill a dissident samurai on behalf of the

⁴⁰ Fujisawa Shūhei, "Hoito Sukehachi," 288.

⁴¹ Fujisawa Shūhei, "Hoito Sukehachi," 304.

domain. The man is a reputed sword master and Sukehachi is hesitant to accept the orders. However, the domain councillor attempts to tempt Sukehachi with promise of a raise in stipend. Perceiving a distinct look of disinterest, however, he subsequently changes his offer to a coercive threat—to punish Sukehachi and decrease his salary if he refuses the mission.⁴² Eventually, forced to concede, he has a duel and defeats the swordsman on behalf of the clan. Once again this appears to parallel the pressures on those working and living within the perceived authoritarian hierarchy of corporate society. We will see later within this chapter that this part of the novella is also treated and adapted in *The Twilight Samurai* directed by Yamada Yōji.

Within “The Bamboo Sword” (1976), Fujisawa appears to parody the want of financial gain. The *rōnin* protagonist, Tanjūrō, struggles to find permanent work and would do anything to keep his wife and daughters fed. He is initially unsuccessful in his job application at the castle, but is eventually offered the chance to obtain a permanent post. This, however, is dependant on his success at killing an insolent samurai called Yogo Zenemon. Before accepting the mission, Tanjūrō is reluctant, pondering whether or not Yogo had suffered similar hardships to himself. Nevertheless, such feelings soon vanish when he is offered a more-than adequate stipend as a reward. Economic desires proved too strong for him.

‘Yogo was hired with a stipend of 350 bushels of rice a year. If you’re successful, I can guarantee you will receive no less.’

‘Three hundred and fifty!’ Tanjūrō’s eyes flashed, and his sympathy for the man receded like an ebbing tide. ‘I guarantee that I will succeed.’⁴³

⁴² Fujisawa Shūhei, “Hoito Sukehachi,” 307–308.

⁴³ Fujisawa Shūhei, “The Bamboo Sword,” 34.

Although the story is set in the Tokugawa period, this depiction in Fujisawa's 1976 work should be considered within the context of the late 1970s–early 1980s. As mentioned previously, in the wake of the recession of the 1970s some firms cut staff to remain globally competitive. Further, here was an increasing emphasis on employee competition, and ability-based evaluations, serving to heighten pressure on individual workers. Within this novella, the authorities effectively set Tanjūrō, a *rōnin*, against Yogo in a competition to the death. Upon arriving at the house where Yogo was bordered up, Tanjūrō reassures his adversary, who wishes to escape the life of a samurai, that “This is trial by combat. If you win you will keep your position.” The two men subsequently share feelings of the hardships of samurai life. Both have lost employment in the past and struggled to look after their families. Yogo voices his anxiety at twice being made redundant. However, when Tanjūrō tells Yogo that he was forced to sell his long sword and now only carried a bamboo one, Yogo sees an advantage against the younger man. He suddenly attacks, but Tanjūrō, being a master of the short sword, defeats him in the end.⁴⁴

Fujisawa makes a definite point of emphasising that both men were effectively pawns of a system, which was primarily concerned with economic and political considerations rather than the fate of individuals. The narration describes how the government had broken up “the clan” and seized its finances after the passing of Tanjūrō's master, who was a trusted *bakufu* lord. Tanjūrō's subsequent lord had committed hara-kiri and left his retainers in dire straits.

⁴⁴ Fujisawa Shūhei, “The Bamboo Sword,” 36–38.

Fujisawa's descriptive portrayal resembles the plight of the modern salaryman amidst the unforgiving capitalist drive and competitive nature of Japan Inc, which has been discussed in the previous section:

Samurai depended on their stipend of rice for survival and were helpless in the face of callous or suspicious masters. Yogo had not been immune to this fact of life ... When it came down to it, however, he had been unable to abandon the steady income his post provided.⁴⁵

This essay previously described Fujisawa Shūhei's thoughts on period novels—that they are able to question humanity and the modern period—and the diversification of values in the course of modernisation. These comments have been shown to be applicable to his works discussed above. Several themes have been identified that appear as criticisms of postwar modernity: the emphasis on conformity within the framework of a “corporate society,” and materialism and ambition. Fujisawa's works are regarded by some as being particularly relevant to Japan today (at the turn of the millennium) from the point of view that they offer solace for many Japanese in times of anguish. His protagonists are considered “paragons that brighten modern times”.⁴⁶ On this point, social commentators Yamaori Tetsuo and Kohama Itsuo see the image of Fujisawa's main characters—low rank samurai, who forge ahead in spite of difficulties—as embodying fundamental qualities, which can benefit today's Japanese.⁴⁷ Furthermore, they suggest that over the course of the high growth period and eventual bursting of the bubble (to be discussed), people have begun to question the ideals or goals of egalitarianism and ambition that

⁴⁵ Fujisawa Shūhei, “The Bamboo Sword,” 38.

⁴⁶ Maegaki (Foreword): “Kono jidai ni koso hitsuyōna Fujisawa Shūhei,” 4–5.

⁴⁷ Yamaori Tetsuo and Kohama Itsuo, “Ima, naze Fujisawa Shūhei na no ka?” 12–13.

accompanied Japan's modernisation. At the same time, it has become difficult to determine whether personal or public values are more important. Fujisawa's works, they maintain, teach people that life is not always about personal freedom, and also show how to approach life amidst the constraints of society. His novels' protagonists exude contentment and resignation and are not envious of others.⁴⁸

2.4. Yamada Yōji and Anxiety at the Turn of the Millennium

The views of Yamaori and Kohama convey a clear sense of discontent with modernity. As we shall see these critics share similar sentiment to film director Yamada Yōji. Prior to discussing Yamada's film adaptation of these works it is not only useful but particularly relevant to examine his own thoughts at the turn of the twenty-first century concerning Japan's postwar modernisation. Subsequent to the cinematic release of *The Twilight Samurai* in 2002, Yamada stated the following: "During the postwar period, the values by which we [Japanese] should live have broken down. In their place, status, power, and wealth have come to dominate, throwing this country into a state of perplexity. I believe I depicted such a time [in *The Twilight Samurai*]." ⁴⁹

For Japan, like other nations, the 1990s is frequently portrayed as a time of disarray, anxiety and confusion. Yumiko Iida, for instance, describes this decade as being characterised by a disintegration of many of the established structures conventionally facilitating societal order, resulting in a collective sense of unknowingness or identity crisis.⁵⁰ Early on in the decade, the US-led

⁴⁸ Yamaori Tetsuo and Kohama Itsuo, "Ima, naze Fujisawa Shūhei na no ka?" 17–18.

⁴⁹ *Sankei Shinbun*, "'Tasogare Seibei' kuranku-appu: Yamada Yōji kantoku ga jidaigeki chōsen," 8 June 2002.

⁵⁰ Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan*, 209–210.

war in the Persian Gulf prompted expectations in the US for Japan to furnish economic and logistical support. Internationally, this raised the issue of Japan's participation in the global political arena. Within Japan, there was much debate concerning Article Nine of its constitution, whereby the nation had renounced all rights to take part in war. Opposition to US international politics ensued within Japan, and public concerns over the military direction their nation would head in the future were increasingly voiced. Views on an active military role, however, were divided.⁵¹ More recently the US-led war on Iraq has also sparked debate within Japan. Prior to this war, opinion polls showed that approximately eighty percent of Japanese were highly opposed to an invasion.⁵² During an interview about *The Twilight Samurai*, Yamada raised his anxieties about where Japan was heading militarily. He talked about the global perplexities surrounding a war in Iraq and appears to question the notion of Japan's involvement, asking "Why do we have to have this sort of international conflict? What will happen if a war starts?"⁵³

Since the 1990s, there has also been much anxiety within Japan concerning its economy. The so-called economic bubble, discussed previously, was relatively short lived. After land and stock prices began to plummet in 1990, the bubble burst and an economic recession ensued, having broad ramifications. For many Japanese who, aside from a spell in the 1970s, had predominantly known a climate of postwar economic growth, this was a great shock. The mainstays of conventional labour practice—lifetime employment and

⁵¹ Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan*, 209–210.

⁵² J. Sean Curtin, "Japanese Public Opinion on the Second Iraq War: Part 5-Postwar Opinions on the Iraq Conflict," (Web Article) 29 July 2003.

⁵³ *The Japan Times*, "Showing Samurai as they are," 16 March 2003.

seniority-based promotion—also came into question.⁵⁴ Amidst the recession, many firms cut staff under the banner of restructuring (*risutora*) and some major corporations announced that they would not be able to hire new graduates, as was the annual practice. By 1994, the unemployment rate reached a worrying (by Japanese standards) three percent, spurring a great deal of disillusionment. Additionally, companies placed a greater emphasis on performance ranking systems rather than on seniority (although this tendency, as noted, developed in part during the 1970s), and employment increasingly favoured easily disposable skills of temporary workers over permanent employees. *Karōshi* also received ongoing attention throughout the 1990s. The established labour practices, which often encouraged excessive work hours, were the subject of much critique.⁵⁵ The managerial ranks of firms, in particular, were hit with redundancies—60,000 between 1992 and 1993 alone.⁵⁶ For many Japanese salarymen, who for several decades had worked devotedly within the supposedly paternalistic nurturing structures of corporate Japan, disillusionment was only natural. Their sense of worth to the firm and nation, along with their beliefs in social security, welfare and reward for their hard work was seriously challenged, aggravating widespread anxieties about the future.⁵⁷

Since the burst of the bubble, there has been an even greater sense of social inequality. Economics professor Yoshio Higuchi suggests that this is due in

⁵⁴ Jeff Kingston points out that lifetime employment was only a reality for approximately 30 percent of workers in the postwar period, but that the concept was nevertheless inextricably linked with the identity of workers as a whole. See Jeff Kingston, *Japan's Quiet Transformation*, 303.

⁵⁵ Norihiko Suzuki, "Middle-aged and Older Employees in Japanese Corporations: Their Plight During the Process of Major Historic Change in Employment," 8-9; Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 214-217; and Takeda, *The Political Economy*, 154.

⁵⁶ Henshall, *A History of Japan*, 174.

⁵⁷ Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan*, 230.

part to the increasing focus on performance-based income and concomitant rising individual pay disparities. A widespread awareness of this inequality is evidenced by the recent publication of two books—“The Expectation-Gap Society” (*Kibo kakusa shakai*, 2004) and “A Low-class Society” (*Karyū shakai*, 2003)—that became best-sellers.⁵⁸ As well as the sense of anxiety and change concerning the ebbing of the economy and its ramifications, an array of youth-related social problems also broadly exacerbated feelings of change and turmoil throughout the decade.⁵⁹ Within the media, numerous incidents of youth violence suggested the moral decay of society. Perhaps the best known example is that of a fourteen-year-old male in Kobe, who murdered an eleven-year old boy in 1997 and displayed his head on a gate post in front of his school. Publicity over young girls prostituting themselves to older men in order to feed their expensive shopping habits—a phenomenon termed *enjo kōsai* (compensated dating)—generated similar public sentiment and concern. There was also evident panic over corruption and scandal amongst business and government leaders.

There were two major events in the 1990s that contributed to antipathy towards national leadership. The first of these was the Kobe earthquake of January 1995. In its wake, public emotions were stirred over inadequate government response and disaster-coping capability. The second major shock was the sarin gas attack on a Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyō cult in

⁵⁸*The Japan Times*, “A Vanishing Middle Class: Rising Income Disparities in Japan,” 4 January 2006. Increasing income disparities are measured by the Gini-coefficient, which has risen steadily since the early 1990s. Yoshio Higuchi states that the increased burden of welfare on young Japanese owing to the aging society (*kōreika shakai*) issue is also responsible for feelings of rising inequality; Yoshio Higuchi, “Economic Disparity in Japanese Society: Fair and Efficient Labour Market is Essential,” (Glocom Platform, 3 October 2005. http://www.glocom.org/opinionessays/20051003_higuchi_economic/index.html). Higuchi points out that between 1986 and 1999, the maximum individual income tax rate was reduced from 70 percent to 37 percent.

⁵⁹ Yoda, “A Roadmap to Millennial Japan,” 634–635.

March of the same year. This event raised serious doubts concerning the police system's failure to prevent chemicals and arms coming into the wrong hands. The sense of moral dilemma was heightened as members of the public questioned how the perpetrators, many of whom were elite university graduates, could lack such morals and awareness of social order.⁶⁰ According to Jeff Kingston, calls for a "mature society" (*seijuku shakai*) have become prevalent within the media in recent years. At the heart of such an envisioned society, he explains, is one that releases prevailing desires for materialism and frees itself of restrictive social structures in favour of a more spiritual way of living.⁶¹ In an article entitled "*A Sense of Fulfilment in Life at Human Maturity*" (*Ningen no seijuku ni kakawaru 'jinsei no jūsokukan'*, 2004), Yamada Yōji expressed concerns similar to the concept of a "mature society." He believes that Japanese youths lack sound judgement and suggests that many have been deprived of beneficial family experiences during their childhood. Thus, they do not come to understand that there is a tacit societal order. In his view, compared to those up until the baby-boom generation (people born between 1947 and 1949), young people today lack the satisfaction that comes from family togetherness. They grow up aiming for stability or positions commanding high income in a world of entrance examinations and competition.⁶² As was discussed earlier in this chapter, corporate values and competition within firms and the education system were broadly intensified from the 1970s (when baby boomers would have completed high school).

⁶⁰ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 318–319.

⁶¹ See Jeff Kingston, *Japan's Quiet Transformation*, 40. Kingston suggests that this vision is representative of widespread acknowledgment that the economic focus of the postwar period has outlived its course and that there is a need for change.

⁶² Yamada Yōji, "Ningen no seijuku ni kakawaru 'jinsei no jūsokukan'," 30–32.

2.5. The Significance of “Twilight” in “The Twilight Samurai”

The Twilight Samurai (*Tasogare Seibei*, 2002) draws on various aspects from each of Fujisawa’s three novellas discussed here. Although there are differences with the original works, I see the most relevant to this thesis as being the film’s setting: *Twilight* (*Tasogare*) specifically refers only to the nickname of the protagonist in Fujisawa’s *Tasogare Seibei*, whereas within Yamada’s film I suggest the term *twilight* also describes the period in which it the film is set—the *Bakumatsu* period (1853-1868). The first chapter of this thesis examined the late Tokugawa period in relation to a growing sense of anxiety amongst the populace. Discontent was defined in terms of both internal and external problems. Many Confucian scholars voiced their concerns over the ills of society, notably the ramifications of a long process of commercial growth and the apparent moral decay of the populace. Peasant protests were a frequent occurrence that gained in strength, particularly from the 1830s, in the wake of widespread famine. At the heart of complaints was an air of disillusionment with the existing feudal structures. Anxieties were further compounded as their country was opened up to the West.

Twilight in Yamada’s film, then, appears to more generally symbolise a time of transition, as evidenced by societal discontent. Indeed, the notion of change and dissatisfaction is reinforced throughout the film on several occasions. I argue that this metaphor, which when considered in relation to Yamada’s own views, is particularly relevant to Japan at the turn of the twenty-first century also. In this regard, the film differs from Fujisawa’s three original works—“The Bamboo Sword” is set in the opening years of the Tokugawa regime, whilst “Sukehachi the Beggar” and “Twilight Seibei” are given only a general Tokugawa-period setting. Fujisawa’s novellas, therefore, do not carry the same

nuance of societal change as the film. I will return to the significance of the film's setting towards the close of this chapter.

Yamada's central protagonist, Iguchi Seibei, is a widower who works in the castle's stores. Like Fujisawa's central characters, he is unkempt and struggles to survive in a state of penury, but displays no lament over his predicament. He typifies the Japanese saying, *bushi wa kuwanedo taka yōji*, (even if a samurai has not eaten, he will use a toothpick as if he has). In further similarity to Seibei from Fujisawa's "Twilight Seibei," the film's main character places family ahead of work obligations and displays little reverence for an authoritarian system that stands in opposition to more humanistic values. Seibei is depicted as a family man, who, since the death of his wife, has spent all of his free time caring for his senile mother and two young daughters, Ito and Kayano. It is for this reason that he is so unkempt.

The portrayal of Seibei and his work environment vividly invokes a vision of the modern Japanese salaryman. He is invited on several occasions to join his co-workers for drinks at the end of work. As is well known, participation in company activities such as after-work drinking, working late, or abstaining from holidays, are often considered part and parcel of Japanese company values. Such participation is an indicator of an employee's work ethic and devotion.⁶³ In spite of the social norm, owing to his familial obligations Seibei repeatedly rejects the invitations of his colleagues. He is shown to be a carefree individual, who is relatively unconcerned with work-related affairs or values, whilst his colleagues are portrayed as being rather weak-minded yet

⁶³ Bernard Eccleston, *State and Society in Postwar Japan*, 73–75; 166. Eccleston notes that inducement to workers for after-work participation often comes in the form of bonuses based upon an individual's performance and also the performance of their immediate work group, thus heightening pressure on individual workers..

ambitious. There is a tacit understanding amongst the samurai that all should go out together, as is evidenced by the persuasive manner in which the young Kawakami is asked by his older “nurturing” colleagues. Although seemingly aware of the expectations of others, Seibei challenges this social norm in favour of looking after his family. Thus, his colleagues ridicule him—“*Twilight*’s a bit of a stick in the mud isn’t he?”⁶⁴

2.6. *Embracing Changing Gender Roles*

A further contemporary theme which Yamada treats is that of changing gender roles in Japanese society. As one of Seibei’s daughters, Kayano, recites the Confucian classics, she questions her father about its usefulness for girls. She comments that, according to her teacher, not only males but females now need to learn also. Seibei’s reply is imbued with sentiment that times are changing: “If you have the power to think, you’ll survive through change. This is true for boys and girls.”⁶⁵ This depiction also seems to have a deeper meaning. Throughout the film, Seibei is shown to be a father who takes pride in his paternal role and looks after his two daughters in the absence of a mother. Although Tanjūrō in Fujisawa’s “The Bamboo Sword” also had daughters, he was not depicted as taking an active role in their upbringing. Within the remaining two works by Fujisawa the protagonists had no children. Thus, this is a new theme that Yamada has introduced within his film.

⁶⁴ “Scenes 2 and 6,” *The Twilight Samurai*, DVD, directed by Yamada Yōji. All subsequent scene references to this film are from this DVD, as listed in the bibliography.

⁶⁵ “Scene 3,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

Tomiko Yoda describes the apparent “destabilisation of Japanese masculine identity” during the economic recession.⁶⁶ She points out that for several decades middle-age Japanese males had found solace within the corporate culture of Japan Inc, but as many men face restructuring or retirement they often find that females within the home do not embrace the return of the long-absent father. The theme of paternal restoration, she continues, has in recent years received a great deal of attention within literature and the media, where it is often viewed as a solution to many youth-related problems. As we have seen, Yamada Yōji seems to believe that the competitive and overriding nature of Japan’s corporate society has had a negative impact on the social awareness of youths. I read his portrayal of this situation, then, as subtle criticism of modernity in respect to an apparent removal of a paternal figure from the home during the postwar period.

I will also suggest an alternative view of this treatment within *The Twilight Samurai*. Since at least the 1990s there has been a great deal of attention on the declining birth rate problem in Japan. In the late 1990s, as part of a series of initiatives aimed at promoting gender-equality at home and work, and alleviating the strain on mothers, a campaign was launched by the Ministry of Health and Welfare encouraging fathers to take an active role in raising their children.⁶⁷ The portrayal of Seibei, who encourages his daughters to break out of long prevalent gender roles, may also be considered in light of this issue.

⁶⁶ See Tomiko Yoda, “The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labour, and Capital in Contemporary Japan,” 865–866.

⁶⁷ Glenda S. Roberts, “Aging Japan’s Urban Landscape,” 76–83.

2.7. *Criticism of Ambition*

In like manner to Fujisawa's novellas, one of the most salient themes addressed within *The Twilight Samurai* is that of desire for wealth or ambition. This again appears to be a commentary on modernisation, and reflects Yamada's own views. Indeed, he maintains that goals based on desire for quantifiable success, be they in educational, financial or other terms, have come to dominate society. Yamada suggests that these values serve to shroud an individual's ability to think about more humanistic or familial ideals, and deprive him or her of experiences that contribute to a tacit understanding of what is right and wrong.⁶⁸

Within this film, Seibei stands in contrast to others who are driven by ambition, and, on a broader scale, to the economic focus of postwar capitalist society. Just as in "Sukehachi the Beggar," the daimyo reprimands the protagonist (Seibei) for his shabby appearance and foul odour. Yamada's adaptation of this idea goes beyond criticism of those in power, such as the daimyo. He presents the existence of overt concerns for status, wealth or appearance even within one's family. After the story of Seibei's public admonishment spread throughout the castle, his uncle, Ibe Tōzaemon, visits to express the embarrassment that Seibei has brought to the family. Whilst he is there, Tōzaemon asks Kayano about her studies. When Kayano tells him that she is studying "book-learning" and needlework, he replies to the effect that she will never become a bride if she spends all day learning from books. Wishing to make Seibei more socially acceptable and thus reconcile the family reputation, Tōzaemon tells Seibei that he knows a woman who would be

⁶⁸ Yamada Yōji, "Ningen no seijuku ni kakawaru 'jinsei no jūshokukan'," 26–32.

willing to marry him, so he should consider getting remarried. The implication is that if Seibei had a wife, he would have more time to take pride in his appearance. Whilst apologetic, Seibei refuses the offer, explaining that he is happy to remain single because “watching... his daughters grow day by day ...is like watching flowers develop or crops mature in a field.”⁶⁹ His uncle strongly reprimands him for such thoughts and leaves with a final comment expressing his embarrassment about his own senile sister (Seibei’s mother): “Whatever will the neighbours think?”⁷⁰ Tōzaemon appears as an exemplar of Yamada’s thoughts above, regarding ambition for wealth or status in the postwar period. He is a product of the entrenched system who has a conservative and patriarchal approach to gender roles and who disregards family life. In comparison, Seibei, who throughout the film exudes contentment and displays a lack of desire to rise in the world, gives priority to looking after his family, including his aging mother. He stands as a disapproving critique of both his uncle and of society.

The irony of this situation, however, is that Seibei’s financial predicament was largely brought about by other people’s concerns for status and reputation: he was forced to both sell his sword and take out loans in order to pay for his late wife’s funeral. It is revealed towards the end of the film that members of the main branch of his wife’s family had wanted a funeral befitting their status, which, as we will see, was much higher than that of Seibei’s own family.⁷¹ In an earlier scene, Seibei’s older co-workers discuss his financial situation and they lament the fact that they too will soon have to face funeral costs. In contrast, the young Kawanami is deemed lucky because his parents are not all

⁶⁹ “Scene 5,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁷⁰ “Scene 5,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁷¹ “Scenes 2 and 23,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

that old.⁷² Modern Japanese funerals are renowned for their costs, and Yamada may also be making a comment on the commercialisation of funerals amidst the economic growth of the postwar era.⁷³

Seibei's lack of ambition and realisation of change is made particularly clear when his friend Tomonojō returns from Kyoto. Tomonojō demonstrates his concern over the political situation regarding the rising dissidence of Satsuma and Chōshū samurai, who could “end the almost two-and-a-half centuries of *bakufu* rule with the flicker of a candle.” He also remarks, “Filthy masterless samurai everywhere..., then someone shouts ‘Heaven’s punishment,’ and swords come out. The Kamo River’s awash with headless corpses.”⁷⁴ When Seibei is offered help finding a guard position at Kyoto by Tomonojō, he declines, despite his impoverishment. He shows an overt disregard for ambition and a desire to escape from the existing social structures: “When times do change I will relinquish my samurai status and become a farmer.”⁷⁵ Earlier in this scene, Seibei's look of boredom in relation to the evident interest of others who were watching young samurai practise at the gun range reflects his disinterest in embracing the boons of modernisation.

2.8. Criticism of Class and Status Disparity

As in the basic storyline of Fujisawa's novella “Sukehachi the Beggar,” the issue of marriage within Yamada's *Twilight Samurai* raises questions about

⁷² “Scene 2,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁷³ On the subject of the commodification of Japanese funerals, readers are referred to Hikaru Suzuki, *The Price of Death: Funerals in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford, CA Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁷⁴ “Scene 6,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁷⁵ “Scene 6,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

class disparities. After Seibei fights a duel with the abusive ex-husband of Tomonojō's sister Tomoe, she begins to visit his house frequently to clean and take care of his two daughters and his mother. Eventually, Tomonojō asks Seibei if he would marry Tomoe, but he refuses, citing the inherent class difference between them. Their conversation plays out as follows:

Seibei: 'Tomoe is a daughter of the 400-*koku* Inuma house. She does not know how hard life is for a 50-*koku* samurai.'

Tomonojō: 'Are you sure you're not underestimating her. She's her own woman.'

Seibei: 'It might be all right to start, but after a few years when she realized that a stipend of 50-*koku* of rice would be her life forever, she would almost certainly have regrets. My late wife was the same. She was from a 400-*koku* family and even until the end had not gotten used to the status difference. She used to say strive for success or my family will lament our situation.'⁷⁶

As Kōzu Kunio correctly points out, there is a noticeable distinction between the film and the original novella—within Fujisawa's short story there is only a difference of 70 *koku* between Sukehachi and Hatsu (30 and 100 *koku* respectively).⁷⁷ This increase in income disparity perhaps reflects Yamada's own beliefs about the economic ambitions of people today, and the aforementioned rising class disparities amongst the population since the burst of the bubble. Yoshimura Hideo notes that marriage between a high-status female and a low-class samurai would be a serious breach of feudal values. He suggests that because love-based rather than arranged marriage is a relatively modern concept in Japan, Seibei and Tomoe's later marriage represents the destruction of an older order, which is predicated upon class distinction.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "Scene 13," *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁷⁷ Kōzu Kunio, *Tasogare Seibei no ningenzō: Fujisawa Shūbei—Yamada Yōji no sakubun sekai*, 56–57.

⁷⁸ Yoshimura Hideo, *Yamada Yōji × Fujisawa Shūbei*, 90.

Criticism of a class-based society is also evident when Tomoe takes Seibei's daughters to a local festival. The narrator explains that although individuals of samurai lineage were prohibited from attending festivals with the villagers and townsfolk, Tomoe was indifferent towards such rules. She taught the children that "samurai owed their very existence to the peasants."⁷⁹ This in itself takes on a deeper meaning when considered in relation to several scenes of peasant corpses floating in the river, seemingly dead from the hardships of poverty.⁸⁰ Kiridōshi Risaku points to the irony of Seibei's work—in the provisions stores—in that it is almost meaningless in times of peace. The stores continued to collect grains and the samurai survived whilst peasants starved to death.⁸¹ Additionally, there is the fact that Seibei tills the fields at home and wishes to become a farmer. I see these points as criticisms of rising disparities, which are often attributed to the postwar capitalist focus in Japan. Fujisawa's "Twilight Seibei" also dealt with peasant hardships, but the domain administration was shown, in fact, to care about the peasants and prevent their starvation. Thus, Yamada's depiction appears as a more vivid commentary on class consciousness at the turn of the millennium.

The harsh reality of the times is also emphasised during several scenes in which Seibei, like the protagonists of Fujisawa's novellas, partakes in home-based piecework (*naishoku*) making insect cages. Yamada, however, appears to reinforce anxieties by raising questions about the increasing costs of living for those existing on the lower rungs of society.

⁷⁹ "Scene 12," *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁸⁰ For peasant deaths, see "Scenes 5 and 13," *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁸¹ Kiridōshi Risaku, *Yamada Yōji no sekai*, 55–56.

Seibei: ‘You know that bath fees increased to seven *mon* last month.’

Cage collector: ‘Prices are increasing everywhere.’

Seibei: ‘Could you pay more for the cages?’

Cage collector: ‘With things as unsettled as they are, no one’s buying insect cages.’

Seibei: ‘But could you just ask your boss for me?’⁸²

2.9. *A New Reason for Living*

Yamada Yōji’s disapproving appraisal of modernity and his intentions concerning *The Twilight Samurai* are made particularly clear in an interview in which he draws a parallel between Japanese workers who devoted or sacrificed their lives for the company and samurai of the Tokugawa period.⁸³ Asserting the predominance of capitalist values and apparent rising nationalism in Japan, he states “Isn’t losing one’s life fighting for the domain or for your country totally meaningless? I wanted to depict a samurai who has another basis for life.” Similar to Fujisawa’s three works discussed here, Seibei in Yamada’s film is summoned by officials and commanded to kill another samurai, Yogo Zenemon, and offered financial reward.

Chamberlain: ‘Kusaka, what’s this man’s stipend?’

Kusaka: ‘50 *oku*, 20 of which are gone on debt.’

Chamberlain: ‘That must be hard with two daughters and an elderly mother. [Seibei] If you bring me Yogo’s head, I’ll make your life a lot easier.’⁸⁴

⁸² “Scene 17,” *The Twilight Samurai*. *Mon* (copper coins) were one of the three primary units of coinage during the Tokugawa period alongside *ryō* (gold coins) and *momme* (silver coins).

⁸³ Muranaka Kenji, “Intabyū: Yamada Yōji,” 7.

⁸⁴ “Scene 17,” *The Twilight Samurai*.

When Seibei politely attempts to excuse himself from the mission, however, his reasoning is more explicit than Fujisawa's protagonists. He remarks that since looking after and spending so much time with his family he feels he can no longer kill. His basis for living is his family, rather than the domain (company) or economic ambition. In spite of his attempts to refuse, his vulnerability and his inability to resist the authority of his superiors is evident. They reprimand him for his seeming disloyalty and ridicule him: "You are relieved of your post! You are kicked out of the clan."⁸⁵ Eventually, Seibei gives in and accepts the mission. He returns home, but realising that he needs someone to help him tie his hair and his kimono (as was required on an official mission) he sends a servant to fetch Tomoe. While she helps him prepare, he tells her that he would like to marry her, but she sadly declines, having already accepted a proposal from another man.

Yamada's criticism of the ruthlessness of the system on low-ranked workers is inspired further by Fujisawa's "The Bamboo Sword." In the scene when Seibei arrives at Yogo's house to kill him, he finds the man to be a fed-up middle-aged samurai who asks for permission to escape. Yogo states that the age of the samurai is over and that the world will soon be a different place. His bitterness is evident as he describes the inhumanness of the system and having twice been punished in spite of his loyal service. After his first lord was disgraced, he became a *rōnin* for seven years and he has now been ordered to commit *seppuku* because his subsequent master had been involved in the imperial pro-restoration movement. "What did I do wrong Twilight? Why must I cut open my stomach?" he questions.⁸⁶ His realisation that the system to

⁸⁵ "Scene 17," *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁸⁶ "Scene 22," *The Twilight Samurai*.

which he had loyally endeavoured to adhere for many years offered no security, undoubtedly mirrors the anxieties of many salarymen in the wake of the recession. Loyalty was supposed to provide them with social security, but such a belief had been destroyed amidst evident changes in society. Similar to Tanjūrō in Fujisawa's novella, Seibei empathises with his adversary and reveals that his sword is made of bamboo. Upon hearing this Yogo turns and attacks him, but Seibei's skill with the short sword eventually prevails. Yogo's death is seemingly meaningless as both men were essentially victims and Seibei had not wanted to kill the man. Nevertheless, he returns home to find Tomoe and his daughters waiting for him.

The film concludes with one of Seibei's daughters, Ito, who was also the narrator, visiting her late father's grave several decades later in the Taisho period (1912-1926).⁸⁷ She reveals that Seibei had gotten remarried, to Tomoe, but that in less than three years he had been shot and killed with a gun in the Boshin War (1868-1869).⁸⁸ Because his lord and clan had fought in support of the shogun (*sabukuha*), Seibei had had no choice. The fact that he who wished to become a farmer had to fight with the *sabakuha* for the continued reign of the shogun evokes a sense of irony. Seibei was a victim of his lord's ambition and modernity, and his special sword ability was seemingly no match for the gun. Additionally, Ito states that although some of Seibei's former colleagues, who had later achieved success, viewed his fate as unlucky, he himself had always been content with his family life. Kōzu Kunio suggests that the depiction of Ito in the modern period serves to bring her existence closer to Japanese today, being separated by only a generation. He states that her

⁸⁷ "Scene 24," *The Twilight Samurai*.

⁸⁸ The Boshin War (1868–1869) was fought between forces of the pro-imperial restoration movement and the supporters of the shogunate, or *sabukuha*.

understanding of her father's values provides a model way of life that transcends history.⁸⁹

This chapter has examined the works of Fujisawa and Yamada in relation to postwar Japanese society and has demonstrated that they function as critical commentaries on modernity and ambition. Yamada has taken many aspects of Fujisawa's novellas that are particularly applicable at the turn of the millennium and has placed them in the appropriate context of change, during the *Bakumatsu* period. Additionally, Yamada included concepts about the family and changing gender roles that are not contained within Fujisawa's novellas.

⁸⁹ Kōzu Kunio, *Tasogare Seibei no ningenzō: Fujisawa Shūbei – Yamada Yōji no sakuhin sekai*, 197–198.

Chapter III

A Translation of Tasogare Seibei

This chapter comprises a translation into English of Fujisawa Shūhei's "Tasogare Seibei." The following source material was used: *Tasogare Seibei*. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002, 9–45). This tale was first published in *Shōsetsu shinchō* magazine, in September 1983.

Twilight Seibei

1

Although it was past eleven at night, lamps continued to burn in the depths of the Sugiyama house, a senior councillor's estate in Koumi-machi, beside the castle's northern moat.¹

There were two guests—Unit Commander Terauchi Kenbei and District Magistrate Ōtsuka Nanajūrō.² With arms firmly crossed, the master of the estate, Sugiyama Tanomu, sighed for the umpteenth time. But before long, he unfolded his arms and slapped his lap abruptly. "At any rate, let us wait to hear what Hanzawa has to report next."

¹ *Karō* 家老. *Kōdansha Encyclopaedia of Japan*, Vol. 4, 150; and William Beasley. *The Meiji Restoration*, 428. The *karō* were a daimyo's most senior officials and were responsible for all areas domain administration. Beasley notes that *karō* were similar in function to the *rijū*, the senior officials or councillors of the shogunate. In consideration of English readership, the title of 'senior councillor' had been chosen for this particular translation. A further related title, *chūrō* 中老, signified a high-ranking position within domain governments only slightly lower in importance to that of *Karō*. See Constantine Vaporis. "To Edo and Back: Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Modern Period," 34. In order to represent this difference, 'councillor' has been selected for *chūrō* in respect of 'senior councillor' for *karō*.

² *Kumi-gashira* 組頭 Unit Commander. Upon entering the service of a daimyo, a samurai was allocated to a unit, or *kumi*, and given an official post. The individuals within the *kumi* would be supervised by *kumigashira*. See John W. Hall. "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," 46. *Kōri bugyō* 郡奉行 District Magistrate. See Mark Ravina. *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 228

“But once you know that there is no mistake, how do you propose to deal with the issue?” Terauchi enquired.

Sugiyama surveyed his guest’s rounded eyes and deeply reddened face. “Then we will truly see to the matter!” he replied. As if further peppering himself up he struck his lap strongly with his fist. “Until we have confronted Hori and have punished him once and for all.”³

The domain at this time was beset with a deep-seated and cumbersome problem—Chief Senior Councillor Hori’s high-handed behaviour.⁴ Nevertheless, Sugiyama and the other councillors also held some responsibility for Hori’s tyranny.

Seven years earlier, the domain had experienced extraordinarily bad weather and was ravaged by an unprecedented poor harvest. Not a drop of rain fell both during and after the rice-planting season that year, but a hot sun, reminiscent of the height of summer, blazed down upon the fields bringing much anxiety to the people. Farmers watered the lands frantically as they awaited the coming of the rainy season. But when the rain arrived in early-June, it ceased within less than ten days, having merely moistened the parched paddies.

In mid-July, conventionally the end of the wet season, the rain once more began to fall. However, it was icy cold, and after five days it began to pour in torrents such as the people had never witnessed before.⁵ The domain’s

³ Note that the original work frequently refers to Hori as Hori *Shōgen* or as Senior Councillor Hori *Shōgen*. The term *shōgen* (将監) is a type of hereditary title. Therefore, to minimise possible confusion in English due to using a number of titles for the same person, the translation will avoid referring to Hori with the *shōgen* title in favour of his councillor term of address where necessary.

⁴ *Han* 藩 or domain. This term refers to the fundamental territorial unit ruled over by daimyo during the Tokugawa period and encompasses in meaning the administrative, military and financial structures of this territory also. *Han* is often translated as clan, but domain is more appropriate for this translation.

⁵ The original text states that the rainy season conventionally finishes around mid-June, rather than mid-July as is the norm in Japan. Considering the surrounding context, I have taken the liberty of assuming that this is a typing error.

rivers and streams completely overflowed, and the pelting of rain resounded around the clock through the earth and the sky, which had become so dark that day was almost indistinguishable from night. When the rain did eventually stop, all of the rice paddies and fields on the plains were submerged beneath water.

It was not only the paddy fields that were affected, however. The Goma River, running in front of the castle, had flooded and the castle towns were deluged. In the river's lower reaches a dam had burst and in many villages people and houses were swept away.

Eventually the water receded and the seasonal July rays of the sun arrived, shining down upon the barely-surviving rice plants. But day upon day a bitterly cold wind swept in from the mountains bordering the province and rippled through the lifeless paddies. As this cold weather continued and as the ear formation of the rice was set back further and further, it became inevitable that the crops would fail disastrously.

It so happened that a poor harvest had struck the domain the previous year also. At that time the financially-strapped domain administration had forcefully collected the land-taxes, and so many people must have even handed over rice they had stored for emergency. Then came the following year's devastatingly bad harvest. But on this occasion, it seemed likely that many people would starve to death.

Domain officials hastily emptied the treasury and arranged to purchase rice and other grains from Kyoto. At the same time they implemented strict anti-famine measures, such as prohibiting the selling of grain to other domains and encouraging the people to save on rice by mixing it with other types of grain. However, the people didn't need to wait for official orders. They raced to the mountains and fields, where they dug for bracken and kudzu roots. They not only dried the leaves of radishes, turnips, potatoes and sweet potatoes to

preserve them but also boiled the likes of knotweed, butterbur and thistle leaves, skimming off the lye and mixing the leaves with rice and other grains to eat. As officials had anticipated, from autumn through until the end of winter the domain was stricken by famine. The people spent a harsh winter plagued by both cold and hunger. Nevertheless, March came and the provisions of rice and other grains from Kyoto finally arrived. The domain officials implemented a forced rationing system and started to sell rice, soybeans and barley to the people, giving priority to samurai retainers, townsfolk, and then villagers. They arranged loans for those who could not afford to purchase rice, and for those considered so poor that even loans were out of the question, they allotted just over a cup of rice per person per day, upon writing the recipients' names on a list for the town or village officials.⁶

In any event, although the councillors at that time somehow staved off the famine and managed to save people from starving to death, they agonized over the ensuing financial problems. They had been unable to collect even one third of the assigned land taxes conventionally paid by the populace in rice and so they borrowed it all. However, there was no telling when this loan amount and also the domain's money disbursed as famine allowance could be paid back by the people.

The reason for this was that the two successive shocks—a poor harvest the year before last followed by an even worse harvest the next year—had left the villages utterly impoverished. Even when spring arrived, every village had a large number of farmers who had no seeds to sow in the paddy fields. Some, who were unable to endure the strain of more than two years of debt, elected not to borrow money for seeds but to leave the fields to take service in the towns.

⁶ Ineffective reform policies in the wake of famine and starvation during the Tokugawa period has been discussed in Chapter One as a source of disillusionment with the feudal system.

As had been feared, many lands were laid to ruin. There was a law that abandoned lands were not to be sold but were to be converted for village cooperative cultivation. But as all of villagers had their hands full with their own paddies this law became extremely burdensome. Even in the springtime, here and there throughout the villages paddy lands were left uncultivated. The atmosphere throughout the debt-struck hamlets eventually lost much of its usual vigour. In spite of this dire situation, domain expenditure did nothing but increase. A thrift ordinance was issued by officials, but this did not improve the situation one bit. In any event, the domain's first consideration was to raise a certain amount of revenue for restoring the crippled agricultural system. When the new year dawned, the councillors summoned wealthy town merchants individually to the castle to negotiate money loans from them. However, the merchants had already lent a substantial amount to the domain officials, and thus showed uniform reluctance to lend more money that they were not sure would be repaid, let alone bring them any reward.

In the end, talks with the merchants lasted right through until the end of springtime, but the domain administration did not manage to borrow even one fifth of the amount required. In the wake of these failed negotiations one councillor and three senior councillors resigned. This left only Senior Councillor Naruse Chūzaemon and Councillor Sugiyama Tanomu.

One of the replacements was Unit Commander Hori, who was promoted to Senior Councillor. Also, Nozawa Ichibei, who belonged to Hori's faction, attained the same post.

Since Nozawa had formerly worked in this position and as Hori's father had long-served as the chief senior councillor and remained as a member of the domain's covert Hori faction, the two new figures symbolized, at least in form, a return to councillor office. These two men, plus Naruse Chūzaemon and Sugiyama Tanomu, who was also promoted, made up the four

senior councillor positions. Yoshimura Kizaemon and Kataoka Jinnojō, both men of Hori's faction, were newly appointed as councillors.

2

Whilst serving as a unit commander, Hori had frequently criticised the former administration's policies. He had even boasted that he knew another way to deal with the failed harvests. Then, after rising to the office of chief senior councillor, he promptly hammered out his own policy for the domain's administration.

This policy involved a ferry-business owner called Notoya Banzō, who lived within the domain. He was a newly established merchant of seemingly limitless wealth, having two boats, each capable of accommodating one-thousand *koku* of rice, and numerous others that could hold either three-hundred or five-hundred *koku*. His boats delivered the goods of various provinces as far as Matsumae in the north to Kyoto and Osaka in the south.

Notoya lived about ten kilometres from the castle township at a harbour town called Sukawa, and he had been involved in negotiations with the domain officials twice before. On one occasion, the officials had been ordered by the shogunate to aid the repair of temples and shrines, but being at a loss as to how to procure the necessary construction money, the domain administration had requested a loan of five-thousand gold coins from Notoya. The other time was when Notoya had applied to contract for the development of the domain's largest reclamation project, called Ashino Land Redevelopment.

However, neither of these negotiations came to fruition because on both occasions Notoya's proposed terms were as stringent as those of a loan shark, rather than being typical of what merchants in the castle town might

propose. The officials were well aware of Notoya's wealth and were struggling to cope with domain's poor financial state. However, they were fearful that if they borrowed from the hard-headed merchant, he would interfere with the domain's administration.

Nevertheless, Hori nonchalantly incorporated Notoya's wealth right into the midst of the administrative policies. First of all, in the name of helping low-ranked samurai distressed over the compelled reduction of their stipends to prop up the domain, he borrowed 10,000 gold coins from Notoya and filled the treasury, slackening the rate of lending by clan samurai.⁷ His next step was to establish a means of low-interest financing between Notoya and the village folk. In doing so he made it possible for the merchant to bypass the clan and offer loans for seed rice and other village expenses directly to the populace.

Although this meant the moneylender authorised by the domain administration began meddling in the villages' affairs, from the outside it appeared to be an expedient way for the clan to aid the impoverished villages. Whatever the future might entail, the fact was that Notoya's money breathed life back into the stagnant atmosphere of the hamlets.

Senior councillors Naruse Chūzaemon and Sugiyama Tanomu, and other former councillor officials were taken aback by Hori's drastic policies. They watched him closely, but did not venture to openly voice their disagreement. This was because the former officials also harboured similar desires to use Notoya's financial power to rejuvenate the domain's administration. All the same, Naruse, Sugiyama and the others could not do so

⁷ *Kariage* 借上, mentioned in Chapter One to have been a source of anxiety for many low-ranking samurai, refers to loans from samurai enforced by the domain administration at times of financial deprivation. This was one method of subsidizing the huge costs associated with the system of alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*) obligated upon daimyō. See Vaporis. "To Edo and Back: Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Meiji Period, 26.

as they were apprehensive that Notoya would irreversibly interfere with the clan administration and that all villages would become bound to his money. This would likely increase impoverishment more than ever in the end. But now that Hori had recklessly and resolutely involved Notoya, there was nothing they could do but watch things take their course.

However, the consequences of this were now becoming apparent. Notoya was recouping his investment in the villagers by taking ownership of the abandoned lands. Previously, officials, including district magistrates and district intendants, who received financial reward from aiding wealthy merchants and land proprietors purchase abandoned lands, were dealt severe retribution indeed.⁸ But on this occasion Notoya openly set about buying up the abandoned lands. Because he justified the purchase of the paddy fields by saying he was collecting outstanding loans, nobody could condemn his actions.

The domain administration had been consistently encouraging farmers to reclaim lands and become independently wealthy. But this system, which had long served as the basis of the domain's agricultural policy, was beginning to crumble, as a powerful proprietor and a large number of tenant farmers never seen before in the domain emerged.

Notoya freely offered to fund various economic policies, but his low-interest financing, which donned a cooperative mask, amounted to nothing but the domain's debt to him. By holding tight to the domain as a sure customer for his loans, the merchant persistently swelled his own financial status. He opened a branch office in the castle town and recently it had become well known that there was no end to the stealthy comings and goings of domain samurai wishing to borrow money. Notoya was the saviour of the domain's

⁸ *Daikan* 代官 The *daikan* were district intendants responsible for the administration of local districts and village heads. Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 225.

dire financial situation, but given the fact that he continued to siphon off interest he was also a parasite of colossal proportions.

Many people pointed this out about Notoya, but Hori remained impassive to their claims. He showed no signs at all of slackening his involvement with the merchant and relentlessly repressed all those who staunchly opposed him. For instance, Regional Intendant Takayanagi Shōhachi, who severely criticised the agricultural policies founded on Notoya's financing, was relieved of his duties the following day and placed under house arrest for the next fifty.⁹ Mitsui Yanosuke, a district magistrate who scrutinized the finer details of Notoya's abandoned-land purchases and secretly compiled a report, was demoted and sent to work as an intendant in an extremely remote area. Suwa Sanshichirō, a subordinate of the finance commissioner, not only documented the details of the domain administration's loans from Notoya but also penned his opinion and tried to send the papers to the daimyo, Izumi no Kami. For his actions, he had his stipend halved and was sent to work at a barrier post on the border, in addition to having his documents confiscated.¹⁰

Hori's high-handedness, however, did not stop at repressing the groups who opposed him. Suwa Sanshichirō was a prudent man and had made a copy of the investigation report and the letter expressing his opinion. One of Suwa's friends, who worked in the close service of the daimyo, secretly passed these on. It was rumoured that upon reading the documents the young lord was

9 *Gundai* 郡代 Regional Intendant. The *gundai* usually supervised judicial and tax matters for territories that were larger than those that district intendants (*daikan*) were assigned to. Additionally, they were fewer in number than the *daikan*. *Kodansha Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, 68.

10 *Kanjōbugyō* 勘定奉行 Commissioner of Finance. See Conrad Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 75-76. Totman explains that this office was held by senior officials of the shogunate and thus the significance of their political status was more important than financial ability. The *kanjōbugyō* had a vast number of clerks, assistants and accounts specialists working under them.

furious. When Hori heard this rumour, however, it was said that he began plotting the daimyo's replacement.

The candidate that Hori had in mind was the daimyo's younger brother, Yogorō. Now although Izumi no Kami Masatomo, the current daimyo, was very astute and energetic, he was sickly. It was perhaps owing to this that despite already being thirty-two he did not yet have any children. Playing upon this weakness, Hori thought up a scheme to force the sharp-minded and fiery Izumi no Kami to take early retirement, and in his place to install his amenable younger brother.

Hori's plan was revealed in a confidential letter delivered to Sugiyama from Senior Councillor Hanzawa Sakubei, who was posted in Edo. The letter stated that about two weeks earlier Hori had suddenly arrived on the pretext of paying a visit to the sick daimyo. However, it seemed that his true goal had actually been to secretly urge Izumi no Kami, whose return to the province had been delayed because of sickness, to retire early. Based on his own observations, Hanzawa added that Hori had likely thought that to carry out such actions when the lord was back home would have had considerable impact on the domain's samurai. Since Hanzawa had gone so far as to report this to Sugiyama, it would seem that he really must have had proof of some kind.

Hori's impudent behaviour had first reared its head about two years earlier, when he had gotten Notoya to contribute money to construct a villa at the seaside. In spite of much criticism, he held extravagant parties at the villa every month and ignored the impoverishment of the samurai and the common people.

Picking up on such conduct by Hori and an outline of his scheme to replace the daimyo, Sugiyama and some other senior statesmen secretly considered measures to deal with the problem. However, Hanzawa's

confidential letter now informed them that the situation had evolved into something they could no longer ignore. It appeared that high-handedness ran in the Hori family: whilst serving as chief senior councillor, Hori's father was also accused of tyrannical behaviour and had been expelled from office. But now it seemed that the younger Hori was beginning to display a level of tyranny well beyond that of his father.

"Chūzaemon and myself, plus Jinnojō." Sugiyama Tanomu counted the members of the anti-Hori faction on his fingers. He and the others had not just sat by and watched Hori's high-handed conduct, but had secretly worked to entice a councillor, Kataoka Jinnojō, into their own faction.

"At this point the councillors' power is divided an even fifty-fifty, but if we were to raise the issue at a meeting of senior officials, in which yourself and Kanō Mataza could attend, then..." Studying Terauchi Kenbei's face, he continued counting. "Excluding the three officials sitting on the fence, the other side will be two men up."

"What if we were to get Chief Inspector Yano to hold an official investigation?"¹¹

"No, Yano does not have the nerve. I would not go as far as to say that he is in Hori's faction, but he is certainly afraid of him."

"It looks as though we have hit a brick wall then." Growing impatient, Terauchi picked up his tea cup from the tatami floor and raised it to his lips. But realizing that it was empty he promptly returned it to the saucer in disgust.

Sugiyama observed Terauchi's frustration, and suggested, "Shall we call for some more tea and have a break?"

"No, it's already late. Let's continue."

¹¹ *Ōmetsuke* 大目付 or Chief Inspector. The *Ōmetsuke* were officials of the shogunate appointed to oversee daimyō-related matters and were subordinate directly to the *rōjū*. Beerens notes, as an example of their work, the examination of correct adoption protocol of a heir to the daimyo, for instance. Anne Beerens. "Interview with a Bakumatsu Official: A Translation from Kyūji Shimonroku,". 379-380.

“Certainly.”

Sugiyama once again returned his gaze to Terauchi and Ōtsuka. “In my opinion, it seems certain that we will have to hold a meeting of officials and openly denounce Hori’s misconduct. That will be my job. If we expose the fact that he urged the daimyo to retire, then Hayasaka and the others sitting on the fence will have no choice but to take our side.”

“But if we don’t have hard evidence, it could backfire. We could all conversely be rounded up in one fell swoop.”

“Of course. I’m referring to after we secure the proof.”

“But Hori is such a pugnacious fellow...” Terauchi prudently added, “that even if we have him at our mercy he is not the sort to just humbly back off. Hori will surely know that if he does back down, then without fail he will be pursued and retribution will be handed down.”

“In this regard, there is one more matter to be discussed,” said Sugiyama. He hung his head momentarily as if listening to the burning of the lamp oil and then looked up. His usually refined and dignified face appeared tense, and in spite of being in his own estate, he lowered his voice.

“If we can get the balance of power in the meeting evenly matched, then there is only one more thing that can be done.”

“...”

“Just as Hori urged the daimyo to retire, we too can force Hori to resign. If he listens to us, then we will call for the chief inspector, but if he doesn’t, then we’ll have no other choice but to stop him leaving and to kill him. What do you think? Chūzaemon has often talked about killing Hori for his misdeeds.”

“...”

“Because we are all against him, if he is sent home from the meeting unscathed, then it will be to our defeat. It’s obvious what would happen next.”

“Of course.”

Terauchi opened his mouth as if gulping for air. After a short silence, he spoke up. “There’s no alternative. However, we need the consent of the other officials.”

“There’s no time. Besides, if we meet often, the enemy will likely become suspicious.” Having used the word “enemy” for the first time, Sugiyama shook his head in dismay.

“It depends on what Hanzawa has to report next, but if he confirms what he said earlier about Hori’s goings-on, then we should send a messenger to Edo immediately to humbly request the Lord’s instructions.”

“An official order to kill Hori?”

“Yes, at the Lord’s command,” Sugiyama replied resolutely. The three men exchanged glances.

“Right then, who will we choose to kill him?”

His face absorbed by the graveness of their decision, Sugiyama stared vacantly at Terauchi. “The killer? Anyone will do. We should choose somebody young who is a skilled swordsman.”

“No. It’ll not be that easy.” As if surprised at Senior Councillor Sugiyama’s ignorance, Terauchi explained that Hori had a bodyguard who never left his side.

“A personal aide called Kitatsume Hanshirō. He trained in *Ono-ha Ittō-ryū* swordsmanship at Edo. People say that within the domain he is without equal. When it comes to a meeting of officials, it’s a sure thing that Kitatsume will accompany Hori.”

“Damn it!”

“Moreover, Hori himself trained at the castle town’s Hirada dojo, and as you know he is a giant of a man. Even if the Lord has ordered that Hori be

killed, if it is not carried out in a wink then the meeting hall will become a scene of carnage.”

“...”

“The foremost matter in deciding the killer is to choose a person who at the very least is on a level pegging with Kitatsume.”

Sugiyama covered his face with both hands and rubbed his weary eyes with the tips of his fingers. Although he could finally see an end to Hori’s despotism in the administration of the domain, it seemed that this last hurdle posed an unexpected problem.

He removed his hands from his face and enquired wearily, “Do you know anyone who could do it?”

“Hmm...” Terauchi folded his thick arms and inclined his head to the side in a questioning manner. But unable to come up with an answer right away he gazed up at the ceiling, racking his brains.

Everyone felt agitated about the problem, but remained silent. Before long, however, Ōtsuka Nanajūrō, who up until this time had not uttered a word, hesitantly spoke up. “What do you think if we were to order Iguchi Seibei to do it?”

“Iguchi?” Sugiyama and Terauchi both looked at Ōtsuka.

“Never heard of him. Who is he?” Sugiyama retorted.

“He works in the accounts department. His annual stipend is perhaps about fifty *koku* of rice...” replied Ōtsuka, a wry grin appearing across his swarthy face. “Ah, yes. He is fairly well-known by the nickname Twilight Seibei.”

“Twilight? What?”

“It means that he really comes to life at dusk.”

“I see!” Sugiyama pounded his lap and frowned. “So he is a well-seasoned drinker?”

“No, that is not the case at all. I apologize for beating about the bush.”

A timid look appeared across Ōtsuka's face.

“It is because Iguchi does all of his own housework. I have never seen him, but I have heard that after he arrives home from the castle, he works like lightning, preparing meals, cleaning and washing.”

“Does he not have any family at home?”

“As far as I have heard he has a wife, but she has been ill for many years and is bedridden.”

“Ah...” Sugiyama and Terauchi exchanged glances. “A laudable type. A fine thing that he's close to his sick wife and cares for her so.”

“I guess it is actually because he is worn out from all his housework, but at work during the day he sometimes nods off to sleep with his abacus in hand. His co-workers bandy about the name ‘Twilight Seibei’ behind his back.”

Sugiyama looked displeased as if he was regretting having asked about him. “Is this Seibei fellow capable with a sword?”

“According to Suwa, he is an expert at the *Mukei-ryū* sword style.” Ōtsuka had named Suwa, the former subordinate of the finance commissioner, who had been demoted by Hori to work at the remote barrier post.

“Perhaps you are unaware, but in Samezaya-machi there is a *Mukei-ryū* dojo, which goes by the name of Matsumura. It has always been just a small, low-key dojo. Apparently having trained there in his younger days, Iguchi was known as a master whose skill level had surpassed his own teacher.”

“When you say in his younger days, do you mean to say that Iguchi is no longer young?”

“He is probably already in his mid-thirties.”

“Seems somewhat dubious to me. What do you think?” Sugiyama asked Terauchi doubtfully. Terauchi Kenbei also pondered the situation, but as nobody else suitable for the mission came to mind, he suggested, “How about we summon him and see?”

3

With the sound of the castle drum signalling the end of work, Iguchi Seibei hurriedly tidied up the documents in front of him and left before anyone else in the office. At the room's exit he mumbled his farewells, but as everybody was well accustomed to his quick departures, they neither replied nor looked at him.

Upon leaving the castle, Seibei set off at a gentle but steady pace towards the town of Kitsune-machi, home to the lower samurai quarters. Passing through Hatsune-chō, with its rows of lively stores, Seibei abruptly ducked under the eaves of a greengrocer's and bought some leeks. Exiting the store, he continued on his way before shortly stopping again, this time to buy some tofu. Having finished off his shopping in such a straightforward manner, Seibei was probably well accustomed to such daily purchases as these.

At that he headed off in slightly stooped-over fashion at a constant stride for Kitsune-machi, where he himself lived. A beard had begun to grow upon his long horsey face, and his tonsure too was rather stubbly. Passers-by looked on suspiciously at Seibei, his somewhat grimy clothes and his hands clutching the soil-clogged leeks. Nevertheless, he was not perturbed and arrived home without having batted an eyelid.

“I'm home!” Seibei called out to the back of the house as he headed to the kitchen. Setting the leeks down on the earthen floor, he scooped water into a basin and submerged the tofu into it.

He then headed back to the living room and opened the sliding doors through into the adjacent room, which was used as a bedroom.

Gazing at his bedridden wife's pale face, Seibei enquired, "Anything interesting happened today?"

"It sounded like a couple of peddlers came to the door."

"Hmm."

Unfastening his scabbard and placing it down he promptly changed his clothes. Although the somewhat cool and cloudy weather of the wet season persisted, he threw on only a light cotton kimono, tucking up his sleeves with a sash.

As per usual Seibei then removed his wife's bedcovers and carefully helped her up. After this he led his wife, who was unsteady on her feet, by the hand to the privy. Once she had finished he put her back to bed and attended to the kitchen.

Whilst the rice and soup were boiling, Seibei wrapped a towel around his head to keep the dust out and hastily finished off the house cleaning, which he had not had time to do in the morning. He then closed the shutters for the night in the places where they were fitted. Seibei knew full well that neighbouring samurai belittlingly nicknamed him things like Twilight because they had seen him doing the housework, but as there had been no one else in his house in the many years since his wife had succumbed to illness, he really had no other option but to do the work himself.

Carrying the meal he had made into the living room, he ate whilst feeding his wife at the same time.

"Tonight's tofu soup tastes especially good, dear."

"Hmm."

"Your cooking's getting just better and better. Sorry to trouble you all of the time."

“...”

After clearing up, Seibei went out and got the materials he needed for his in-home piecework from the wife of his colleague, Koderu Shinpei. His piecework was making insect cages.

He carried the materials to the living room and, sitting himself down close to the bedroom so that he could talk to his wife, he set to work. Actually, it was she who did most of the talking. Seibei just threw in an occasional response. His wife, who listened to other people talking outside the house while lying in bed, knew more of the world than Seibei, who worked all day long at the castle.

Before long, however, she grew tired of talking and said she would sleep. Once more Seibei helped her to the privy. After putting her to bed, he closed the sliding doors and earnestly went about his work.

In the summer, or at least at the start of spring, I've just got to take Nami to recuperate at a hot springs in the mountains, Seibei thought to himself. Nami was his wife's name. At the age of five she had lost both of her own parents, so she came to live with Seibei's parents because they were distant relatives. She was five years younger than him, and as there were no other children in his family the two were raised like brother and sister. Nami was supposed to leave the Iguchi household to get married when she was of appropriate age, but these circumstances changed after Seibei's parents had suddenly died of illness. In keeping with his parents' last words, he and Nami got married.

Several years ago, Nami contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. She neither coughed nor spat blood, but seemed to Seibei to be getting thinner day-by-day as her appetite gradually faded.

The doctor's a quack, thought Seibei. He had doubts about the tuberculosis diagnosis given by the town doctor Kume Rokuan, who

prescribed medicine for Nami. The one thing that Kume had said that seemed the most credible, however, was that the illness would half clear up if his wife had a change of climate and ate nutritious foods.

Suddenly he had an idea about where he could take her. Usually the very notion of recuperating at a hot springs in the mountains would be rather alien to a low-status samurai on an annual stipend of 50 *koku*. But a sundries-merchant, who often popped into the accounts office when visiting the castle, had apparently heard about Seibei's story and kindly visited him at work. He had told Seibei that there were two inns at Tsurunoki Springs where he regularly stayed, so he could introduce them to him anytime he wished to take Nami there.

Banking on this merchant's kindness, Seibei hoped somehow to take Nami to the retreat at the foot of the mountains.

Kume had told him that she relied too much on her husband both physically and mentally, and that if she continued in that condition she would probably eventually become completely bedridden. So before she got to this stage, Seibei wanted to take her to Tsurunoki Springs, where the air was fresh and the fare delicious. It was just that at the moment he could not quite afford to do so.

Seibei looked up. He could hear somebody softly tapping the front door of the house. Knitting his eyebrows, he walked to the earthen floor near the entrance and opened the door to find a man standing there, his face wrapped in a cowl.

"I'm District Magistrate Ōtsuka," said the man, stepping inside and closing the door behind him. "I apologise for calling so late ..."

Removing the cowl, Ōtsuka Nanajūrō craned his neck and presumptuously peered into the living room. He then returned his gaze to

Seibei and asked, “Can you accompany me to Koumi-machi? Senior Councillor Sugiyama has said that he would like to meet you.”

“Do you wish that I come now?” Seibei looked at Ōtsuka slightly perplexingly. “Is there some matter of urgency?”

“Of course it’s urgent. It seems that the senior councillors are extremely eager to talk with you.”

“...”

“I’m sorry to disturb you when you are hard at work, but please come with me,” said Ōtsuka placatingly.

Returning to the living room, Seibei picked up his sword scabbard. After inserting it through his waistband, he casually checked the blade-retaining pins in the hilt. Then, just to reassure himself about his wife he opened the sliding doors, but found her wide-awake and staring at him worriedly.

“I’ve been summoned by the council in Koumi-machi, so I have to go out.”

“All right.”

“I won’t be long now, so just go back to sleep.”

Leaving the door ajar, Seibei extinguished the lamp and left with Ōtsuka.

4

After compelling Seibei to secrecy, Sugiyama Tanomu disclosed the conditions of the daimyo’s order to kill Hori.

“I’ve heard about your skill in the *Mukei-ryū* style of swordsmanship from Ōtsuka and also from Suwa Sanshichirō, who is stationed at a barrier post. I entreat you to fulfill this mission!”

“With all due respect...” Seibei raised his bowed head slightly.

“Would it be possible for you to ask another person to complete the task?”

“What?” Sugiyama stared at Seibei ominously. “Are you saying no?”

“Only if you so permit...”

“Foolish man. We’ve secretly summoned you tonight because there is nobody else. Are you frightened by what you have heard here?”

“No.” Seibei shook his head. “It’s just that the meeting is at night...”

“And so?” Sugiyama exclaimed. “Emergency meetings for officials are customarily held after six o’clock at night, after the retainers have left the castle. Moreover, the date has been set and cannot be changed!”

“I’m afraid that there is much business that I need to attend to during the evening...”

“That business would be feeding your wife and such would it not?” Sugiyama replied with a smirk. “I hear you are called Twilight Seibei. You cook, you clean...”

“And it seems that amongst other things he has to help his wife to the privy, or bathe her down with warm water if the weather is hot,” Ōtsuka Nanajūrō chimed in with more details that he had heard about Seibei.

“Oh, that’s terrible.” Sugiyama stopped smiling and fastened his eyes on Seibei. “So your wife has to wait for you to get home before going to the toilet?”

“Yes.”

“That’s awful. No good for her health at all.”

The senior councillors murmured amongst themselves, before shortly returning to the issue at hand.

“Be that as it may, the mission you have been charged to carry out is a grave matter for the domain. We cannot compare this to helping your wife to the toilet. On the day of the mission, just ask someone to help your wife.”

“Sirs, I beg your understanding in this matter.” Seibei bowed his head deeply, touching it to the tatami floor. “It is something I cannot request of another person.”

“What is this you are saying? Can’t you just carefully explain to your wife that you have important business that night and ask another woman in the neighbourhood to help?” Sugiyama stated overbearingly. Then, suddenly softening his tone, he continued. “Seibei, if everything goes well, I’ll increase your stipend.”

“...”

“And if you are not happy with your present job, you can change to something you would prefer.”

Noticing Seibei’s sullen and rueful face, Sugiyama Tanomu continued to curry favour. “Seibei, say something. There must be something that you want. Anything.”

“Not really.”

“How can you say not really? I have heard that your wife has tuberculosis. Do you not wish for her recovery?”

For the first time Seibei looked up and made direct eye contact with the Senior Councillor Sugiyama, who acknowledged him with a nod. “Who is your doctor?”

“The town doctor, Kume Rokuan.”

Sugiyama leaned over and whispered in the direction of Ōtsuka, who was sitting beside him. “What’s Kume’s reputation?”

“He is a quack,” Ōtsuka murmured in reply.

Sugiyama cleared his throat and turned back to face Seibei. “Kume is a quack. If you are counting on him, then your wife’s life is beyond saving.”

“ ... ”

“I’ll send her to see Tsuji Dōgen, who often comes to my estate to treat my own family. He’s got a good name for himself. He’ll easily cure her tuberculosis.”

Sugiyama’s words seemed to suddenly grasp Seibei’s attention. But pondering what he should do on the night of the mission, he gazed up at the ceiling, sighing.

“How about this idea?” asked Ōtsuka, coming to Sugiyama’s rescue. “On the day, Iguchi will hurry home after work. While the councillors are assembling for the meeting, which should start around seven o’clock, he could take care of things at his home and then hastily return to the castle. What do you think?”

“Well if that be the case...” Seibei replied in a relieved manner.

Whilst having some slight misgivings, Sugiyama agreed reluctantly. “It’ll probably work all right. However, Iguchi must not be late! If he doesn’t make it in time, our plan will all be in vain.”

5

It was exactly as Sugiyama Tanomu had anticipated. Unit Leader Tōno Uchiki and the former councillors, Hayasaka Sebei and Sekigorō Zaemon, who Sugiyama considered to be neutral, did not move either way. The meeting reached a deadlock with Hori’s faction maintaining a slight upper hand.

Even at the disclosure of the cosy association between Hori and Notoya, the majority did not tilt as far as to join the anti-Hori faction. It

seemed that some people had not heard of Notoya's land purchases or Hori's extravagance before, for while Sugiyama Tanomu was speaking, keen indignation arose from amongst the meeting attendees. Nevertheless, each time it was silenced by a rebuttal from Hori in his deep, bellowing voice.

"You say that using Notoya was wrong, but was there an alternative means of aiding the domain's finances after the crops failed? I think not! We should not forget you know, it was Notoya's money that saved our clan!"

Hori did not mince words over the rather delicate matter. Although some people frowned upon hearing him, what he said was indeed true.

"Notoya is a merchant. If we had not paid him interest he would not have helped us. It was a tough decision to let Notoya purchase the abandoned lands, but converting them for village cooperative agriculture was, from the outset, little more than the imposition of the domain's policies. It was a true headache for the villagers. Disposition of the lands was not something bad—Notoya was happy, the villagers were happy, and the clan had offloaded to the merchant its own public obligation."

"But..." countered Terauchi Kenbei. "The fact that only Notoya, out of all of the domain's merchants, gets fat by helping the clan is not a commendable deed by any means."

"There's no need to be so concerned," said Hori with a grin.

"Having made Notoya wealthy, the domain can now siphon money back from him. Or have you had complaints from other merchants, Kenbei?"

Now would be the ideal time to expose the matter, thought Sugiyama Tanomu. Discussing policies with Hori was pointless. But if he were to disclose how Hori had intimidated Lord Izumi no Kami into privately agreeing to retire early, and how, after returning to the province, Hori had secretly prepared to make Izumi no Kami's younger brother Yogorō the new lord, then those smug-looking former councillors sitting slightly removed from the

meeting, could not help but be perturbed by the facts about Hori's high-handedness, which were previously mere rumours. Now was the time to attack, Sugiyama thought to himself.

But Iguchi Seibei had still not arrived. Sugiyama Tanomu was annoyed. It was all just as he had feared. The time was already past eight o'clock, and the reason why Seibei hadn't yet shown up was probably because he was taking care of his sick wife—taking her to the toilet. The fool!

Sugiyama became angry. This was his final chance to expose Hori's longstanding high-handedness and his irreverent nose-poking in the Lord's succession. But the vital clincher to his campaign was Iguchi Seibei. If he were to merely lay out the details while Iguchi was not there, then the cunning Hori would slip through his fingers. Yes, he would probably escape and conversely denounce Sugiyama himself. If Iguchi was not at the ready to carry out the Lord's command, then it would be a very difficult matter to broach—the bastard!

Which did he consider more important—a crisis affecting the entire clan or his wife's illness? Visualizing Seibei's horsey face, Sugiyama cursed silently and began to fret, imagining that Seibei could probably not figure out which was the more critical matter.

"It wasn't anything extravagant. I just brought the woman in to serve sake..."

Hori and an old man from his faction called Hosoi, who had served as councillor many years earlier, were talking amongst themselves. Needless to say, it was a somewhat honeyed exchange.

"Those maidens who served the sake were perhaps just too beautiful," Hori jested.

An indulgent chuckle arose from the meeting attendees. Of course, it was probably one of Hori's own men who had laughed. A relaxed atmosphere

began to settle over the assembly. Deftly reading out the situation, Hori raised his gruff voice.

“At this stage, any doubts concerning my recent methods of dealing with domain affairs have, for the most part, now been dispelled. Since there are some among us who perhaps believe my actions to be immoral, I will duly endeavour to be more modest. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that those who lead at the political forefront will be the target of improper questioning. There are many instances when decisions that I deemed to be good, have been judged by others to be bad. Since it seems that all of you here before me this evening have been adequately made aware of the circumstances, I implore your continued forbearance.”

Hori had shrewdly used the meeting to foster the consolidation of his own faction. As he triumphantly recited his opinion, he cast a sharp and indeed icy look in the direction of Naruse and Sugiyama, who had called the meeting in the first place.

“The night is getting on and since there are many elders here, I suggest we bring the meeting to a close.”

“Hold on a minute. There is still a matter I wish to discuss,” exclaimed Sugiyama, throwing a quick glance at Naruse Chūzaemon and Terauchi Kenbei. Iguchi Seibei had not yet appeared, but if the meeting were to disperse at this point, it would be the rout of the anti-Hori group. Hori would clearly seek revenge, purging Sugiyama and the others from all councillor posts.

Whilst denouncing Hori, Sugiyama was counting on one thing—that Seibei would manage to arrive. If he didn’t, they would likely be defeated. Straightening up he could feel sweat billowing out and soaking his entire body. It was a deathly cold sensation despite the evening being very muggy.

“On the fourth’, Senior Councillor Hori traveled to the clan mansion in Edo, supposedly in the name of visiting the sick lord, Izumi no Kami.

However, it has come to light that his motives for his visit were not so genuine.”

In a spirited voice, Sugiyama once again began to denounce Hori, who was seated directly across from him. With this, Hori and another man, Yoshimura Kizaemon, whispered something to each other and glared sternly at Sugiyama, who repelled the gaze.

Not only the neutral former councillors and members of the anti-Hori faction, who had already been unaware of all of the facts, but many within Hori's faction also looked on in utter disbelief as they listened to Senior Councillor Sugiyama explain how Hori had intimidated the sickly lord into agreeing to retire early.

It appeared that Hori had kept his dark secret largely to himself and had not told everyone in his own group. A soft murmur arose in the meeting hall.

It looks like things are taking a favorable turn, Sugiyama thought to himself. Raising his voice above the din, he shouted, “All of you here this evening, including the person in question, have heard of Senior Councillor Hori's rampant high-handedness.”

Aiming a piercing gaze towards Hori he continued. “Although his arbitrary conduct in the recent governance of agricultural affairs and in Notoya's preferential treatment is evident, he has cunningly been able to circumvent the situation. However, regarding this last matter he should not fare so well. Yes, you are quite right gentlemen, this is indeed a true marker of Hori's highhandedness.”

“It seems that some people here wish to entrap me and have fabricated such odd stories to do so,” Hori exclaimed, stretching his shoulders and glancing around the meeting hall. Then suddenly returning his gaze to

Sugiyama, he roared abruptly, “Tanomu, I suppose you have proof of what you say. Show me the proof!”

“Proof?” replied Sugiyama. He noticed as the doors in the corner of the room slid open and Iguchi Seibei made his long-awaited appearance.

Although Hori’s body guard, Kitatsume Hanshirō, who was waiting beside the door, suddenly rushed towards the intruder, he was kept in check as Seibei raised both his hands in a gentle but surprisingly imposing gesture. Maintaining this form, Seibei hurried over to the hall’s main seats, where the councillors were sitting, and sat down directly behind Terauchi Kenbei. This is more like it, Sugiyama thought to himself.

Most people at the meeting had initially looked up in surprise and gazed inquisitively at Seibei. But after Terauchi turned around and muttered a few words to the visitor, who was concealed behind his broad frame, they seemed to lose interest and returned their eyes to the top seats. Suddenly, Hori let out a huge roar.

“It is an extremely well-known fact within the clan, that Hanzawa Sakubei is Sugiyama’s right-hand man! And even so, Sakubei’s letter is no proof. It is a worthless!”

“If that is so, then I would like to question Senior Councillor Hori. Here is a document received directly from our Lord Izumi no Kami in Edo.”

Sugiyama Tanomu promptly pulled a letter out of his coat. It was wrapped in a special paper that was used to document official commands of the Lord. Upon recognizing this paper the meeting participants all suddenly fell silent. “The lord’s letter confirms everything that Sakubei wrote about Senior Councillor Hori...”

“...”

“Allow me to read this out.”

“This is a trap!” bellowed Hori. His face had turned as white as a sheet. “This all is a wicked plan to entrap me!” Hori glanced around the meeting hall, but most of his faction hung their heads, while the rest merely steered at him coldly.

“Senior Councillor Hori, calm down!”

Having remained silent up until this time, the former councillor Hayasaka Sebei, who was the eldest of all the councillors, spoke up. Although conventionally he did not take sides, the old man glared at Hori sharply.

“If what Senior Councillor Sugiyama says is true, then this is an extremely grave matter and we will discuss it now. It is not yet dark, so there is no need to pay mind to the elderly. I wish to fully ascertain the truth of the matter.”

“With all due deference, ‘former’ Senior Councillor ...” Hori brusquely replied. “Perhaps it is interesting for idle elders, but this meeting is not at all to my liking. Pardon me, but I am going home. However...” Hori threw a precipitous glance towards Sugiyama. “This is certainly not the end of the matter!”

“Senior Councillor Hori!” Sugiyama’s stern command kept back Hori, who had started to get up. “This meeting is not yet over and I ask you to refrain from leaving before it has finished!”

“Get out of my way,” Hori shouted, starting towards the exit.

Received a wink from Sugiyama, Iguchi Seibei ran like lightning behind the officials. Bearing down upon Hori, he called out to him. Just as Hori, who had turned around, placing his hand on his short sword, Seibei drew his own sword and cut simultaneously. It looked to be just a gentle cut, but that single stroke saw Hori topple to the ground. Everybody rose to their feet suddenly, whilst Kitatsume, who had been standing beside the door, ran towards Seibei clutching the hilt of his sword.

“Settle down! Return to your seat immediately!” yelled Sugiyama, who also had risen. Displaying Izumi no Kami’s letter overhead, he waved it about like a flag. “This is the official order from the Lord. I will now read it, so please listen up. The Lord has decreed that if Hori did not listen he should be killed. Nobody else must draw their swords. If they do, it will be considered that they are engaging in a private conflict and they will be punished accordingly.”

6

As Seibei reached the town’s perimeter, he was suddenly struck by the blueness of the sky above him. The southern sky was free of wind and the sun cast a pleasant warmth down upon his skin. Seibei was carrying two bundles each wrapped in cloth. One of these contained seasonal fruits such as nashi and persimmon, which he had purchased the previous day. In the other bundle, there was medicine that he had received from Tsuji Dōgen, as well as laundry that he had taken home after he last visited his wife on his day off.

Almost four months had passed since he had first taken Nami to recuperate at Tsurunoki Hotsprings, located about a mile from the castle town. Thanks to Sugiyama Tanomu, his wife had gotten a little better, as the medicine that Doctor Tsuji had prescribed appeared to be working. When Seibei had visited her about a month earlier, she had been able to stand up and walk across the room independently.

Sugiyama had organised an inn for Seibei’s wife and had arranged for the doctor to administer medicines. Furthermore, rather than the inn staff looking after Nami, she was given special care by the wife of a local farmer, who often worked at the councillors’ estates. Nevertheless, Seibei did not mind all of this as Sugiyama had promised it to him.

After Hori's retributive death, many of the administrative posts in the domain were restructured and the Hori faction were swept from their official positions. Sugiyama Tanomu was promoted to the post of chief senior-councillor, and Terauchi Kenbei rose from unit leader to councillor level. All those who had been demoted by Hori in the past were recalled to their official posts, and Magistrate Ōtsuka Nanajūrō became an apprentice to the district intendant. Setting aside the facts that Notoya Banzō oddly received no rebuke and that he continued his relationship with the domain, the officials had acquired some form of wealth and honour in return for the downfall of Hori's faction.

In spite of being busy reforming the domain administration, Sugiyama Tanomu had not forgotten to arrange for Tsuji Dōgen to examine Nami, and had told Seibei that if there was anything more he should need then he all he had to do was ask. Nevertheless, apart from the help for his wife's care, Seibei had firmly declined this offer. In actual fact, there was nothing more that he wanted.

Seibei nimbly crossed the bridge on the edge of town. Beyond this point only a few peasant cottages lined each side of the road, and after he had passed these, the road pared down to a rough track. Harvested rice paddies stretched out before him, and in their background, the mountains to where he was heading were bathed in sunlight.

However, a short distance along the track Seibei paused. He stood completely still and then cautiously placed his bundles on the ground before unfastening the chords of his sword scabbard. At the end of the track stood a small shrine, which was smothered by a handful of trees. Suddenly, a man emerged from the shadows of the shrine. It was Kitatsume Hanshirō. As Seibei silently studied Kitatsume, who blocked the otherwise deserted path, he

recalled Sugiyama's words of caution—it was rumored that Kitatsume was planning to kill him.

Little by little Kitatsume drew closer. When he was about ten metres away he drew his sword. But Seibei remained still, with his legs spread apart in a stance, as Kitatsume glided towards him. Neither man uttered a word as they clashed swords, but after only a single stroke Kitatsume fell to the ground.

I have to report it, thought Seibei. Picking up his parcels he made his way back to the river on the edge of town. As he washed the remnant blood from his sword a thought suddenly occurred to him. If he went to report the incident, he would be detained at the offices and interrogated. Worst of all, his time off would probably be cancelled and he would not be able to visit his wife.

Seibei re-sheathed his sword after carefully wiping any moisture from its surface. With parcels in hand he headed off towards a gatehouse that he could see downstream. There was a subordinate of the construction corps working there, and Seibei planned to give the man a nashi in exchange for reporting to Sugiyama that he had found a dead person on the road. Once Sugiyama was made aware that the dead man was Kitatsume, he would likely work out what had happened and promptly deal with the matter, Seibei thought to himself.

About thirty minutes later, he arrived outside the Tsurunoki Hot Springs village, where he noticed a female figure standing in the shade of a pine tree. Before long, he realized that the fair-skinned woman who stood staring at him was his wife Nami.

“Did you walk here by yourself?”

“Yes, just slowly...” His wife smiled warmly at him. A pleasant glow had returned to her face.

“Shall we go?” he said, as the pair traced their way back to the inn, with Seibei matching his wife’s pace.

“Well, you’ll leave here when the snow comes.”

“I suppose so, but I am already missing home. And...”

“Yes?”

“I know I’m a little ungrateful, but I’ve had enough of the fancy meals they serve here.”

“If that’s the case, I guess you’ll have to come home then. I’ll cook whatever simple fare you so desire,” joked Seibei without changing his expression.

“Once the snow disappears you might come back again. I’ll ask Doctor Tsuji if it’s all right.”

“I’ll perhaps be much better by the time the snow comes, dear. I really want to cook a meal for you.”

“You need to take it easy. Just see how you feel,” he replied.

There was a muddy patch on the track and so Seibei held his wife by the hands and helped her across it. Warm autumnal sunlight filled the village at the foot of the mountains.

Chapter IV

A Translation of Hoito Sukehachi

This chapter presents a translation of a further novella by Fujisawa Shūhei that was examined in Chapter Two—"Hoito Sukehachi." The translation is based upon the following source: *Tasogare Seibei*. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002, 281–314). *Hoito Sukehachi* was first published in *Shōsetsu shinchō* magazine, in June 1988.

Sukehachi the Beggar

1

Ibe Sukehachi was often called "Sukehachi the beggar" or "Ibe the beggar." But this was not because he actually went around begging, but because he was filthy from head to toe.

Sukehachi was always dirty. His clothes were grimy, he hardly ever bathed and he often smelt terrible. He worked in the domain stores, and there was a rumour that, aside from days when he went to the castle office, he would make his way directly from home to the storehouses, which were outside of the castle near the perimeter of the third bailey, with his hair untied and his face unshaven.

One day, however, everyone came to realise that this was not just a rumour, but was true. It all happened in May last year. The daimyo, who had just returned home from Edo, suddenly decided to carry out an inspection of the domain stores. These comprised five granaries, where the rice collected from farmers as tax was stored, and a depot for provisions. Sukehachi was the foreman of the depot.

When the daimyo arrived with about ten officials, including a senior councillor on his monthly duties and the head page, who had all just concluded their inspection of the granaries, Sukehachi and Stores Commissioner Kusaka Shōbē began to show them around the provisions depot.¹

Needless to say, the depot was where rations were stored for times of emergency, such as when the clan went to battle or when their castle was besieged. Foods, such as husked rice, soybeans, salt, and miso; and dried radish, edible ferns, squid and cod were all packed into individual barrels and straw sacks, which were piled up as high as the ceiling.

At key points during the inspection, Sukehachi and Kusaka opened up certain sacks to show the daimyo and his officials how the miso, dried cod and other materials were organised for immediate use. They also explained important points such as the preservation state of the husked rice. It was the job of the workers in the stores to make sure the provisions were well organised so that they stayed free of insects and did not rot or go mouldy.

The daimyo seemed to be satisfied with what he was shown, and when Sukehachi explained about each provision, the mild-mannered lord listened to him attentively, nodding from time to time and offering words of appreciation.

¹ The term *kanō* (Senior Councillor) appears in this second translation also. Refer to Footnote 1 of Chapter Three for an explanation of their function. *Tsukiban* 月番 ‘duty rotation’ was a system first introduced amongst officials of the shogunate in 1634 by Tokugawa Iemitsu. Totman suggests that this had two purposes: military—there would always be one person on full-time duty, and political—as a means of providing equality amongst certain officials and thus helping to maintain harmony. See Conrad Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 301. n5. *Koshogashira* 小姓頭. Pages (*koshō*) who served the shōgun performed several duties that included attending him throughout the night, assisting with dress and certain official business, and were often his second male child. See Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 101–103, 182. Additionally, Mark Ravina states that the term ‘secretary’ may be more accurate than ‘page’ in describing the power that came with the position of *koshō* in close relation to the daimyo. Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 242–243. n. 32. *Okurayaku bugyō* 御蔵奉行. A Commissioner of Stores was first appointed to oversee the running of the Shogunate’s warehouses in 1636 by Tokugawa Iemitsu. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 75.

But about halfway through the inspection, he began to screw up his dignified and refined face occasionally as if sniffing for something. Then, just when the inspection was about to finish without incident, he seemed to have realised that the annoying stench did not belong to the provisions in the depot.

Pausing abruptly, he twitched his nose as if making doubly sure of the source of the smell before finally fixing his gaze upon Sukehachi.

“Is it you that I can smell?”

“Yes my Lord.”

Sukehachi’s face turned bright red and then suddenly became pale. Long unshaven wisps of beard stuck out here and there, and on closer inspection one could see that his cheeks and chin were covered in tiny cuts. He was in a woeful state indeed. It was apparent that having heard that the daimyo was coming for an inspection, Sukehachi had flown into a panic and had tried to hastily shave, probably with a pocket-knife or something similar.

Judging from Sukehachi’s poor shaving efforts, the daimyo had readily assumed that he probably didn’t take a bath either. He glared at Sukehachi and proceeded to reprimand him.

“Samurai must set an example for the common folk! Slovenliness is completely unacceptable!”

Before the day was out the story had spread throughout the castle and Sukehachi had become the laughing stock of the entire clan. The matter didn’t stop there, however. Senior Councillor Mizoguchi Shuzen, who had also attended the inspection, was furious. He threatened to severely punish Sukehachi and only changed his mind after much pleading from Kusaka Shōbē, Sukehachi’s immediate superior.

“Ever since Ibe Sukehachi lost his wife to illness two years earlier he has been a grieving widower. His recent unkemptness is because of this

predicament, so I do feel that there is room for sympathy. He is an excellent worker and has never slipped up.”

Continuing with his plea, Kusaka further aroused the councillor’s interest. “Sukehachi is a swordsman of the *Katori-ryū* style. He is the son of Ibe Tōzaemon, who was granted permission by the former daimyo, Lord Unkei’in, to start his own branch of this style of swordsmanship. Since his family has been personally honoured by the former lord’s patronage, and as I promise to give Sukehachi a severe talking-to concerning his appearance, I graciously ask for your leniency in this matter.”

“Even though you say that the former daimyo honoured his family, what’s right is right and what’s wrong is wrong...” replied the senior councillor. Nevertheless, whilst listening to Kusaka’s passionate plea, Mizoguchi’s original enthusiasm to punish Sukehachi at all costs seemed to have gradually faded away as the topic of conversation took a different course.

“I’ve seen Ibe Tōzaemon in a match before. It was when he defeated a martial arts instructor, Shida Unemenosuke, in a single stroke. I wasn’t even twenty at the time, but I still can’t forget it,” exclaimed the senior councillor.

“Oh, I also saw that fight,” Kusaka replied. “It was certainly a fine match, was it not? After that defeat, Shida resigned from his position as an instructor. Oddly enough I believe that match was the one and only time when Tōzaemon used his sword technique in public.”

“Now that you mention it, you may be right,” replied Senior Councillor Mizoguchi. Gently wagging his head he added, “But from watching his match against Shida, I feel that he only needed to do it once.”

“Yes, I would have to agree,” said Kusaka.

“Actually, Tōzaemon passed away a few years ago now...” Mizoguchi added, stroking his thickly-stubbed and rounded chin. “Was Sukehachi left to hold the reigns of the Katori school?”

“Yes, it is rumoured that every last aspect of the tradition was passed on to him,” Kusaka replied. “However, it is only a rumour and no one has ever seen Sukehachi use either a real sword or a bamboo one.”

“That is also a little odd,” remarked the senior councillor. Then, realising that in just a short time their conversation had drifted into a talk about sword fighting, and that the matter of retribution had all but vanished, he decided not to punish Sukehachi after all. “Well... I suppose the Lord was not all that angry about it anyway...”

But although Sukehachi escaped official punishment, other samurai continued to snigger at him. From that time on, he came to be nicknamed ‘Sukehachi the beggar.’

Behind his back, some samurai would pleurably jibe, “Here comes Sukehachi the beggar. Don’t go near him or you’ll start to smell too,” or “He’s so shabby even the Lord affirmed it.”

After a reprimand by Kusaka, Sukehachi started going to work clean shaven and even in clean clothes. But in less than a month, he began to look filthy again. It would be going a bit too far to call him a beggar, but it certainly wasn’t long before he returned to his earlier dishevelled self.

He would make his way to and from work with his stubbly face hung towards the ground. There was no doubt that he was shabby and smelly, but one could see in Sukehachi a sad and lonely man who had lost his wife before the age of thirty, when one watched him walking amidst the rain or saw him lifting his head and glancing at men staring and laughing at him from afar.

But because of this, there were at least a few samurai like Kusaka, his superior, who, rather than jeering, looked at Sukehachi somewhat sympathetically.

2

However, the truth of the matter was more prosaic. There was little difference, in fact, between Stores Commissioner Kusaka and others, who saw a sorrowful widower in Sukehachi's shabby looks, and those frivolous people who jeered at him and called him a beggar, purely because of his appearance. None of them had been able to discern his true feelings.

It was certain that as a widower his life had not been easy. But the fact was, he just wasn't as sad about his wife's death as everyone believed. This was not to say that he wasn't sad in suddenly losing his wife of almost six years. It was just that surprisingly quickly after her funeral he was struck with a sense of freedom. He could never tell a soul, but his late wife Une had been a terrible wife and had caused him a great deal of bother indeed.

Une had been two years older than Sukehachi. Before their marriage was arranged, she and her family were anxious that being past marriageable age she might remain single for the rest of her life. Thus, she hastily agreed to marry Sukehachi without considering their different backgrounds.

Her family status was 100 *koku* of rice, whereas Sukehachi's stipend was a mere 30 *koku*. Because of this, their standard of living and family customs were different.

Even until the end of Une's life, it seemed that she had not gotten used to the difference in status between their families. Her pet phrase had been to tell Sukehachi to work hard and rise up in the world. She would say that if he didn't, then her family would be sorry. To Sukehachi, however, her claim that her parents might lament marrying off their aging daughter to a poor worker in the castle stores, like himself, was completely absurd.

In the beginning, Une had only said such things to her husband in private, but as time went by, she began to boast about own her family's wealth

and to speak badly about her poor new life in front of Sukehachi's mother also. After her mother-in-law died of sickness, however, Une was no longer beholden to anybody and became quite a vixen.

Considering the extent of her nagging—from chiding her husband for his use of chopsticks to his manners in the bedroom—Sukehachi had no doubt that she been that way even before they had gotten married.

Although he was younger than her, he, of course, was the head of the household, and in their early married days had sternly scolded Une for her behaviour. But before long, he realised that Une's unpleasant temperament could make anyone feel quite helpless. Their frequent squabbles or his rebuke did not change her one bit.

Nevertheless, she was not a woman that he could divorce just because he did not like her. Some relatives on his mother's side, to whom he was indebted, had suggested Une as his bride. On top of that, despite having been a bad wife she was actually quite adept at the housework. She was fussy about cleanliness and up until her death two years earlier, she had kept his house sparkling clean, from the family altar to even the sliding-door rails and the wooden floorboards. In the end, all Sukehachi could do was to say nothing.

So although his sudden unkemptness following Une's death was certainly due in part to him having lost a woman's helping hand, it was also because he felt liberated from his wife's nagging and because he was simply enjoying a carefree lifestyle and did not care about his appearance.

Commissioner Kusaka's comments about his subordinate being a grieving widower were, needless to say, a slight overstatement. Whilst living with Une, Sukehachi had truly experienced the bitter side of relationships.

He had become despondent and had begun to walk around town gloomy-faced even before Une had passed away. But nobody noticed his state

until recently. His gloominess had simply become more noticeable as his clothes had gotten even filthier.

These days when he returned home from work, Sukehachi would immediately take off his hakama pleated trousers, and his *haori*, the jacket worn over his kimono, and cast them onto the ground beside him. Then, he would sit cross-legged and set about his home-based piecework making insect cages to earn extra money to supplement his stipend. If he was tired, he would just lie down on the floor, but nobody would complain. Oh, how easygoing single life was, he would often think to himself.

Strictly speaking he didn't actually live by himself. His relatives had sent an old woman named Okane to live with him and help out around the house. However, she was almost seventy-years old and she only cooked rice. She hardly ever cleaned the house and spent most of her time fast asleep in the kitchen.

Sukehachi sometimes had doubts about the supposed good intentions of his relatives, who had probably sent him this senile and bothersome old woman because she was no longer of any use to them. But because someone was there to cook for him he was content nevertheless.

He would take a bath only when he felt like it, and would otherwise just go around smelling a bit sweaty. Sometimes he would take the money earned from his piecework, and with his hair and head wrapped in a towel, he would make his way over to a bar in a nearby town to have a drink. Such was the life Sukehachi had come to enjoy since Une had passed away. He often heard others unkindly calling him a beggar, and his relatives has been incessant in telling him to get a new wife. But for the time being, Sukehachi had no intention of giving up his slovenly yet carefree single lifestyle.

However, when on one April evening a woman came to visit, Sukehachi, although still smelling a bit, was sitting up reading his favourite Chinese history book.

3

Having heard from Okane that there was a visitor, he got up and made his way to the front door. A woman, whose face was veiled in a cowl, greeted him warmly.

“It’s been such a long time...”

“Ah...hello.”

“Forgive me for visiting so late at night.”

“No, that’s quite all right.”

In spite of his response, Sukehachi had no idea who the woman was and figured that she had probably mistaken the house. As if reading his thoughts, the beautiful young woman asked with a smile, “Have you have forgotten me? I’m Iinuma Hatsu.”

“Uh...” Taken aback, Sukehachi became totally flustered. “Ah...Miss Hatsu? You look so grown up. I didn’t recognise you.”

The Iinuma family were scribes, and the eldest son, Tomonojō, was Sukehachi’s best friend. The two had been friends since childhood, when they studied Confucius together at Tōyota Zanaka School. Although they hadn’t seen much of each other in recent years since Sukehachi had taken up his post in the stores, at one time they had been such close friends that they used to visit each other all the time.

Tomonojō’s father was extremely well-read and was so highly trusted by the daimyo that he would always be asked to write important diplomatic documents. In recent years he had become somewhat sickly and now only

worked in his home province. But in the prime of his life he had spent alternate years between here and Edo as part of the daimyo's entourage—all daimyo were obligated to alternate attendance in the capital. Because of their experience, there was an air of worldliness and sophistication about the Inuma family.

Having grown up in such an environment, Tomonojō's two younger sisters were not shy like other girls. When Sukehachi visited his friend's house, rather than meekly retreating out of sight, they would unreservedly bring him sweets. Once, when he happened to visit during the time of the annual doll festival in March, they invited him into a specially decorated room and poured him drinks of white sake. So he knew Hatsu very well, from when she was a child to when she was a young adult. To be more exact, it was probably only up until she was about thirteen or fourteen. After that age, she and her sister grew more demure and retreated to their rooms when Sukehachi visited Tomonojō, so he saw less and less of them.

But about two years ago he had heard from Tomonojō that Hatsu had married into the Kōda family, whose members held the hereditary post of guard-unit commander.²

Hatsu had changed a great deal. This was why I didn't recognise her straight away...Sukehachi thought as he gazed at Hatsu. She now had beautiful eyes and pale cheeks, and although slim, her breasts and hips were shapely. Compared to the beautiful woman now standing in his doorway, the young girl he used to know could only be described as a butterfly that had not yet hatched.

"By the way..." Sukehachi remarked, regaining his composure. "Is there something urgent?"

² *Obangashira* 御番頭 Guard-Unit Commander. John.W.Hall. "Materials for the Study of Local History in Japan," 187–212.

“Yes,” replied Hatsu, lowering her eyes. But when she looked up again, she had a smile on her face.

“Did you know that I have left my husband, Kōda Toyotarō?”

“Yes, I’ve heard.”

“I suppose you have also heard then that he will not accept the divorce and that he has gone on the rampage.”

“Yes, that too I’m afraid.”

Just lately Tomonojō had told him about the divorce. He had said that although it was totally understandable that Hatsu had come back home, her former husband, Kōda Toyotarō, frequently burst into their house and caused all sorts of trouble.

Fearing for Hatsu the Iinuma family had sent her to hide with some relatives, but Kōda had intruded upon them also, ranting and shouting incessantly. Sukehachi had not taken a great deal of interest in the news about Hatsu, because at the time he was absorbed in his own problems.

“Your husband probably just cannot bear to lose you, Miss Hatsu.”

With this, Hatsu looked away shyly. She had a faint but puzzling smile on her face.

Then, looking at Sukehachi, she said resolutely, “The divorce is finalised and that man is no longer my husband.”

“I see,” replied Sukehachi. Gazing at Hatsu, and then collecting himself he asked “And so...”

“A short while ago, Mr Yasumatsu, who arranged my marriage, sent us an urgent message warning that Kōda was on his way over again in a drunken state.”

“Hmm.”

“Well, Tomonojō became panicked and told me to ask you if I may stay here tonight. So I just rushed straight over...”

“...”

Sukehachi folded his arms. Kōda Toyotarō was the most senior student of an *Ittō-ryū* swordsmanship dojo called Itamaki, in the castle township. He was also a huge powerful man. In comparison, Tomonojō's father was sickly and Tomonojō too was more of a scholarly type. He had barely practiced with only a bamboo sword at the domain's martial arts hall as a child.

Sukehachi could imagine Tomonojō's panic, but he was a widower. If people were to find out that Hatsu had stayed at his house, it would certainly become a huge scandal within the domain. He would be scoffed at just as he had been before, but this time it would seriously affect his dignity as a samurai. Worse still, Hatsu too would be ridiculed.

“It's impossible,” he replied resolutely.

The puzzling smile that he had noticed earlier returned to Hatsu's face.

“I thought perhaps you might say that,” she said in a slightly heedless manner.

“I understand that you are living on your own, but could you possibly shelter me just for a short while?”

“Oh, well of course I can do that.”

Suddenly realizing that he had left his guest standing in the earth-floored entrance area the whole time, Sukehachi remarked hurriedly, “Well then, do come in.”

But as soon as he had said so, he felt his earlier feelings of discomfort return. Both he and his house were perhaps much too filthy to receive a visit from such a beautiful woman. As he stared at Hatsu, his sense of long-dormant shame was instantly reawakened.

“Okane, bring some tea for us,” he yelled in the direction of the kitchen, whilst leading Hatsu to the living room. Sukehachi had been slightly cunning in yelling to the old woman. Okane was probably sleeping again and so he

needed to wake her up, but he also thought that if he shouted, then Hatsu might not notice his body odour and the dusty tatami floor quite as much.

In any event, after the two sat down in the living room with some lukewarm tea that Okane had made for them, Sukehachi resigned himself to the situation.

Forcing a smile he remarked, "Perhaps you're a little taken back by my dirty house?"

"No, not at all."

"Well, this room is the cleanest. I give it a sweep every couple of weeks you know," he added rather masochistically whilst gazing at Hatsu. She looked back at him with a slight smile. There was not a sign of the antipathy that he had anticipated.

Perhaps she just had too many of her own worries to notice other people's problems. In any event, Sukehachi felt relieved.

"Okane, the old woman, is quite old and I work at the castle, so it is a bit hard to get the house cleaning done," he explained. Then, avoiding any justification for his bad smell, he changed the subject. "How is your older sister? Is she keeping well?"

4

It must have been almost twelve o'clock by the time the pair left Sukehachi's house, and sure enough along the way they heard the bell of Kōrenji Temple chiming midnight. It was not far from his home to the Iinuma house, and sandwiched between them was a town called Hyakken-machi, comprising a mix of foot soldiers' houses and the homes of craftsmen and merchants. They scurried along the dark deserted streets and soon found themselves outside Hatsu's house.

When Sukehachi gave the gate a gentle push it swung open freely. It had not been bolted. Sukehachi paused and carefully surveyed the main building. There were no signs inside the house of burning lamps and so it seemed that everyone was asleep.

“Well it looks like Kōda has already gone,” Sukehachi said, turning to face Hatsu. Bowing deeply, she replied in a relieved manner, “I really am sorry to have inconvenienced you this evening.”

The pair entered the estate and slightly incautiously made their way towards the entrance of the house. But as they did so, the flickering light of a lamp within suddenly caught their attention. Someone’s coming, Sukehachi thought. Quickly blowing out his own lantern he hid in the shadows of some nearby shrubbery, sheltering Hatsu behind him. As soon as he had done so, the front door swung open and a man holding a lantern emerged from within. The man promptly turned to face the other way and so they did not catch sight of his face, but discerned that such a huge bodily frame could only have belonged to Kōda Toyotarō.

With his back still turned towards them the man began to speak, his words sounding slurred from alcohol.

“So it’s settled then? Two in the afternoon behind Hannyaji Temple. Do not forget!” he added in a gruff, emphatic tone.

“You should not demand such a ridiculous thing.” Tomonojō’s high-pitched voice rang out in a loud but distraught manner. Sukehachi and Hatsu could not see him in the darkness, but Tomonojō seemed to be just inside the entrance to the house.

“I will not participate in such a thing! You are drunk! But even then it is nothing but absurd to propose a sword duel. If you continue to insist, then I will report you to the authorities.”

“Here we go, such exaggerated talk yet again,” replied the man mockingly. “I am not suggesting a life-or-death match. I, Kōda Toyotaro,...” At this point, he burped suddenly. Then, excusing himself he continued. “I am no fool. All I am suggesting is a match using wooden swords. Samurai should behave as such. Let us settle the matter once and for all! And furthermore, I am not drunk!”

“What nonsense. This is the end of such talk.”

“Nonsense you say?” Kōda shouted, trying to intimidate Tomonojō.

“I already know that it was you who arranged for Hatsu to divorce me. The old man...Yasumatsu...he admitted it to me.”

“...”

“I have no regrets about Hatsu. If she dislikes me then I guess that is that. But I have a bone to pick with you. Thanks to you, I am now the laughing stock of the clan because my wife ran out on me. What I am saying is that in order to rid myself of such shameful feelings, I am challenging you to fight. Do you not agree that this will make both of us feel relieved?”

“But, I...” Tomonojō started in a hoarse voice. “Frankly speaking, I have never used a wooden sword or otherwise.”

“That is not my problem,” Kōda sneered, laying bare just how cold-hearted he really was.

“If you really don’t want to, then you don’t have to turn up. But if you decide as such then my own feelings will remain. Perhaps I will have to come your house from time to time to stir up some trouble. Is that all right with you? Oops!...”

Sukehachi and Hatsu saw Kōda quickly raise one of his arms as if he was steadying himself.

“I would advise you not to report anything. I am not stupid, so I wouldn’t do anything that I’ll be punished for.”

This man is not worthy of being a samurai, thought Sukehachi. Suddenly he realised that Hatsu's hands were trembling feverishly as they grasped the back of his hakama pants. But just as he turned around to check on her, a thought occurred to him—she's absolutely terrified of him.

Why had he not realised this earlier? When Tomonojō had first told him about his sister's divorce, he had mentioned that she had been bullied terribly.

At the time, Sukehachi had assumed that his friend had been referring to the often-strained relationship between wife and mother-in-law. He had thought it was Kōda's mother who bullied Hatsu, but it now seemed that the bully was the man standing in front of him.

Having heard the way in which Kōda had spoken to Tomonojō, he realised that Hatsu had married a man who took great pleasure in tormenting others. Sukehachi recalled the perplexing smile that she had on her face when she came to his house earlier that day. That smile must really have been a cry for help, he thought, quietly breaking away from Hatsu's grasp and emerging from the shadows.

"Would it be acceptable if someone else were to stand in for the duel?" Sukehachi called out. Kōda reacted to this with surprising speed for his immense size. He shot a few metres to the side, swinging around to face Sukehachi and loosening his sword in the scabbard with his left thumb, in readiness to draw.

However, rather than drawing, he kept his grasp on the lantern with his right hand, raising it up so that he could see who had spoken. As he did so, he appeared to notice Hatsu hiding in the shadows behind Sukehachi.

He shook his head several times and asked, "Who are you?"

"Ibe Sukehachi. I work in the castle stores."

“A stores worker?” he replied. Then, he appeared to recall Sukehachi’s name. The tension in Kōda’s voice suddenly disappeared and a scornful grin came across his face. “So you are the one they call Sukehachi the beggar?”

“Yes I believe there are some foolish men who say such things.”

“And just what might be your relationship to Iinuma here, or Hatsu?”

“Tomonojō has been my friend since childhood, and I know Miss Hatsu only because she is his sister. Unfortunately our relationship is not as you suspect. Ah yes, I have a word of caution for you,” Sukehachi responded, observing Kōda vigilantly.

“Miss Hatsu is now divorced, and so do you not think it inappropriate and rude to omit a term of address for the lady? I find it indeed offensive to the ear.”

The sardonic smile vanished from Kōda’s face, which almost instantly took on a forbidding appearance. He spat towards the ground.

“Well then, are you free tomorrow?”

“Yes, it is my day off.”

“Since you have chosen to step in for the fight, I guess that you are quite confident of your abilities.”

“Well, how about it? Why don’t we make it something to look forward to tomorrow?”

“Behind Hannyaji temple, two in the afternoon. The weapon of choice will be the wooden sword. I’ll arrange the witnesses. Do you agree?”

“It’s fine by me,” Sukehachi replied.

With this, Kōda departed, but not before throwing a piercing glance, first at Hatsu, and then at Tomonojō, who had emerged from within the house.

5

Reaching the forest path beside the main hall of the temple, Sukehachi heard the bell chiming two o'clock. The forest air was somewhat cool, and the young leaves of chestnut and konara-oak trees formed a blanket overhead through which scatterings of bright sunshine radiated down. Hurrying through the forest he emerged in a patch of open ground at the rear of the temple.

Upon his arrival, several men bathed in warm sunlight all turned their eyes in his direction. The men were well-groomed and he guessed that they were Kōda's friends. Although there were quite a few of them, they had probably come as witnesses just so they could watch the fight, Sukehachi thought to himself. He noticed Kōda Toyotarō standing in their midst.

One of the men muttered something and all the rest chuckled, although rather reservedly whilst staring at Sukehachi. He figured that the man had probably called him a beggar, or something similar. He stood silently as Kōda, who had also laughed, regained his countenance and strode forward.

"A bit late don't you think?"

"No, actually I'm not that late at all. I just heard the bell ring two o'clock."

"I guess that's all right then," Kōda replied. Suddenly, he noticed the white stick in Sukehachi's hand.

"What's that?" he demanded sharply.

"We use it in my school of swordsmanship in place of a wooden sword."

"That's not what we agreed to!"

"Well, people call me Ibe the beggar. If we were to assume close stances with wooden swords, perhaps you would be overcome by my smell and topple over."

This time the men in the group unreservedly burst into laughter. Kōda, however, was not laughing. He studied Sukehachi and his stick, as if weighing up the pros and cons of the two different weapons.

“Actually I was just joking. If I were to hit you with a wooden sword, you might die. It is inappropriate for a simple match in a paddock. On the other hand, this wooden stick is a safe weapon and probably the worst damage it would do is to cause a bruise.”

“How am I supposed to believe that?”

“If you don’t, then see for yourself. It is very light.”

“Well, throw it over to me.”

Sukehachi flung the stick towards his adversary, who caught it and proceeded to make a few single-handed practice swings. Seeming satisfied, Kōda tossed it back and remarked casually, “All right, let’s begin.”

The two men assumed stances, facing each other with weapons poised. Whilst Sukehachi held his stick on an angle towards the right, Kōda’s sword was pointed directly at his opponent’s face. He was a giant of a man and there was an intimidating strength in the way in which he positioned his sword at the ready. Nevertheless, the witnesses acknowledged that although the stoutly-built Sukehachi paled in comparison with his adversary in terms of stature, it was evident from the stance he assumed that he was quite an experienced swordsman. If Kōda were to attack carelessly, for instance, he would likely encounter a downward blow from his left, from Sukehachi’s weapon.

As the pair slowly and carefully adjusted their footing the confrontation seemed to go on and on, drawing gasps of excitement from the onlookers.

It was Sukehachi’s piercing gaze that overwhelmed the spectators even more so than his seemingly impenetrable stance. Their impression of the man

had changed drastically, as they watched him study the movements of his opponent with unblinking raptor-like eyes.

It was Kōda who made the first move. With a spirited shout he lunged forward strongly, striking Sukehachi's shoulder. But in spite of his quickness, his opponent's rearward movement was swifter. As Sukehachi glided backwards, the group of men watched as his four-foot stick seemed to instantly shrink to about one foot in length.

Then, holding his ground, Sukehachi took a slight step forwards. His movement appeared to be a perfectly-matched counter to Kōda's attack, and his stick almost magically lengthened in his hands, striking Kōda in the side of the head with a hollow thump.

To the men watching this appeared to be nothing more than a flash of white light. But Kōda's body flew backwards towards the ground and lay there unconscious. By the time the other men reacted tumultuously to the outcome, Sukehachi was already walking away in the direction of home.

Later that evening Tomonojō brought him a gift to show his appreciation, and several days later while Sukehachi was out, Hatsu visited and cleaned his house. From this time she would often make her way over and do the cleaning for him.

Then after about one month had passed, Tomonojō visited Sukehachi again and told him that Kōda, probably because he was embarrassed at losing, had not shown his face since the match. As the two men talked amongst themselves, Tomonojō asked his friend if he would be interested in marrying Hatsu and explained that that was actually what she wished for. However, Sukehachi declined the proposal, saying that he had learnt his lesson about marrying into a family of higher salary and social status. The status of the Iinuma family was 100 *koku* of rice, just as his late wife's family had been.

He knew Hatsu had a pleasant personality and was much to his liking. But he feared that if she were to become his wife, after a few years even she would perhaps get fed up with their impoverished life and become unpleasant and bad-tempered. He could not shake off the bitter memories of the long years spent with his late-wife, Une, and he did want Hatsu to become like her.

He was also troubled because the Iinuma family felt indebted to him for taking Tomonjō's place in the duel. He somewhat regretted having shown the sword techniques, passed down within his family, in public. His late father had warned Sukehachi against doing so after having taught him all of the traditions of his school.

"Keep the skills I have taught you a secret, and only use them for defending yourself. Showing off to others will only lead to great misfortune."

So when he thought about his father's warning, Sukehachi could not quite accept gaining such a beautiful bride because of his thoughtless, public display of the secret techniques. This was why he firmly declined the proposal to marry Hatsu. And later that year in autumn, the misfortune that his father had predicted eventually seemed to come about.

6

"I suppose you have heard about Tonomura Yashichirō stabbing a councillor to death?" enquired Senior Councillor Mizoguchi Shuzen.

"I have," Sukehachi replied, pondering why on earth Mizoguchi had summoned him to his estate rather than to the castle to ask such a thing.

At the beginning of summer, the castle town had been shaken by a grave and shocking incident. A councillor named Naitō Geki was stabbed and killed inside the castle by Unit Commander Tonomura. Rumour had it that the two men had been on bad terms and that it was Naitō who had been at fault.

Perhaps for this reason, Tonomura, who under normal circumstances would have been commanded to commit ritual disembowelment, still remained under house arrest and awaited sentence after the Chief Inspector's questioning. There was also talk that although a sentence had been passed, it depended upon the final approval of the Lord, who was in Edo.

In any event, autumn had arrived with no change to these circumstances, and Mizoguchi, who was once again on monthly councillor duty, had summoned Sukehachi to his estate to discuss the matter.

"About one month ago we received word from the Lord in Edo regarding Tonomura's punishment," Mizoguchi revealed. Tonomura and all of his family members were to be banished from the domain. The Lord acknowledged that Tonomura was not entirely at fault and reduced his punishment accordingly. One would assume that he should have been grateful for the Lord's leniency. "However, his attitude is disrespectful and perverse!" Mizoguchi continued. Tonomura had said that he was very grateful for the Lord's generosity in this matter, and that he would, as ordered, send his family out of the domain. But he had grown up on the estate, where he now remains, and he could not bear to roam the lands of another domain. Wishing to die at his home, Tonomura perversely said for the clan to just send someone to kill him.

The domain officials kept vigilant watch over Tonomura's family while they sent an urgent messenger to Edo to request further instructions from the Lord.

"A response arrived just this morning. The Lord is furious," said Mizoguchi, staring Sukehachi straight in the face.

"He has ordered that somebody be sent over to the estate immediately to kill Tonomura, as he himself requested. Well, such a response was only to

be expected really. After all, Tonomura disrespectfully brushed aside the Lord's benevolence."

"..."

"By now, you've probably guessed why I summoned you here. The domain officials have ruled that you are to be sent to kill him."

"Just a moment please." Sukehachi felt his hairs stand on end. Tonomura Yashichirō was not just a unit commander. He was a master fencer—a true swordsman, who was well above the skill level of Kōda Toyotarō.

"Perhaps you are aware, but Commander Tonomura is reputed to be a master of the *Jikishin-ryū* school of swordsmanship. I..."

"Yes, yes..." Mizoguchi replied with a wry grin.

"That is exactly why we have chosen you. Just this spring did you not put on an impressive display of your sword skills in a match against Kōda's son?"

"..."

"The domain is not just ordering you to do it without any reward. Provided you are successful you can expect an increase in stipend. In my estimation, it should be well over five or ten *koku*."

Waiting for a response Mizoguchi stared at Sukehachi. But perceiving a look of dejection, he suddenly adopted an authoritarian tone. "If you should decline, I'll have to do something about it. Kōda's son, Toyotarō, is still suffering from ringing in his ears since you struck him during your match. I will consider the fight as a private dispute and, rather than an increase, I'll decrease your stipend!"

After he had returned home from the senior councillor's estate, Sukehachi poked his head into the kitchen and asked Okane if she could tie his hair.

“I have official orders to kill a man on behalf of the domain, so I suppose I have to have a wash and tidy up my hair,” he explained.

“I used to be able to but I can’t anymore.”

“Aah, you’re hopeless you know.”

Pondering what to do, he suddenly had an idea.

“In the past, you’ve taken a message to the Iinuma household in Tachibana-machi, haven’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Go there again and explain to Miss Hatsu that I urgently need her assistance. I’m sure she will come. Hurry, and don’t fall over.” After she had gone, he fetched some water from the well and carefully washed his hair and body.

In less than an hour Hatsu came rushing in, just as he had anticipated. She was shocked when Sukehachi relayed the situation to her, and said very little whilst tying his hair and helping him to get changed.

As she calmly yet busily went about helping him prepare for the mission, for a fleeting moment Sukehachi imagined they were family. It was probably because of this vision that he decided to bring up the marriage proposal. Just by being there Hatsu made him feel warm all over, and the shortcomings of his widower life became clear to him.

“Tomonojō recently mentioned something to me...” he said. He sat enveloped in happiness with his eyes closed, while Hatsu continued with his hair.

“Miss Hatsu, if you have no objections, I’d like you to become my wife... What do you think?”

He felt the hands on his head pause for a moment before resuming their work. After a short silence, she responded. “If only you had asked me a little earlier...”

“...”

“Just the other day, my marriage to another man was arranged.”

“Oh,” he replied, feeling as if he had suddenly been awakened from a dream. He was ashamed of his self-indulgent thoughts.

“How rude of me. It was quite inappropriate that I asked you here.”

“No, that’s quite all right. I am glad that you did.”

“But, really, it is good news.”

“Oh, it is not so auspicious,” Hatsu replied softly. “Actually, the man I am to marry is quite old and he has two children.”

As he passed through town after town on the way to Takajō-machi, home to Tonomura’s estate, Hatsu’s words echoed over and over in Sukehachi’s mind.

He felt unusually depressed as he lamented, for his own sake and for Hatsu’s, having rejected Tomonojō’s initial suggestion to marry his sister.

This is terrible! he thought, shaking his head and trying to fight off visions of Hatsu. Lost in thought, he walked tirelessly before eventually coming to rest outside Tonomura’s estate.

Treading his way up a small flight of stone steps, he stood momentarily in front of the wide-open gate. He could see right inside. It looked deserted. Tonomura’s family had been permitted to leave for the domain border earlier that morning, and so only Tonomura himself should be there, lying in wait for someone to come and kill him.

But there was no sign of him anywhere. All was silent. Sukehachi untied the cords of his *haori* coat and loosened his sword slightly from its scabbard in anticipation, before crossing the deep threshold into the estate. Studying his surroundings he edged his way towards the entrance of the house.

Suddenly, he heard a loud creaking noise as the gate swung shut behind him. He quickly flung off his coat and pivoted around to find a brawny-faced man watchfully bolting the gate.

“Just so that nobody interferes,” said the man, smacking his hands together and turning fully to face his intruder. Although not quite as massive as Kōda Toyotarō, he was certainly tall in stature and had a thickset chest. He looked to be over forty years old.

Sukehachi also noticed several distinctive features about the man. His eyes were rounded, his thin lips were tightly set, and he had what one might call a pug-nose—it was large and snubbed, as if saying that big noses such as his were just made for sniffing.

Tonomura was said to have studied the *Jikishin-ryū* style of swordsmanship for ten or so years at Edo. After this he returned home to take over as the head of his family and inherit his parents’ estate. At that time he was said to have had no equal within the domain, but then again that was over a decade ago. If there was any advantage to be had, that was it, thought Sukehachi as his adversary called out to him.

“Having been sent here by the clan, I assume you are probably a man of some ability. But I do not know your name. Tell me it now!”

“Ibe Sukehachi.”

“Ibe....ah, so you’re Tōzaemon’s son?”

“Yes, that is correct.”

Tonomura gazed hungrily at Sukehachi, scrutinizing his adversary in silence. Then, he gave a short nod before looked up gleefully and tightening the sash binding his sleeves.

“An opponent who studies *Katori-ryū* swordsmanship...Well then, shall we begin?”

Sukehachi drew his sword and deftly assumed *Seigan* stance, with his blade tip pointed directly towards his opponent's face.³ As he did so he noticed Tonomura's garb—a special type of hakama worn by ninja and straw sandals.⁴ The man had not chosen these clothes so that he could quickly defeat Sukehachi and flee from the castle town. No, these clothes could only mean that he was indeed well prepared for this fight. A chill ran down Sukehachi's spine as he realised that he was facing a truly demonic swordsman, whose earlier gleeful smile had probably been one of satisfaction at having a seemingly worthy opponent. Just as Sukehachi had suspected, here was man of formidable ability.

Tonomura stood about ten metres away from him and assumed *Hassō* stance, his sword held high up in the air.⁵

Moments later he rushed forward. It was as if the sword merely rested upon his shoulder, and was a gutsy and impressive move.

Sukehachi widened his stance and waited for the attack, as a lengthy battle commenced.

Kneeling on all fours, Sukehachi hung his head towards the ground gasping for breath. His panting and the beating of his heart were immeasurably intense, but they gradually began to subside as he looked up to see Tonomura's body lying on the ground before him.

³ *Seigan* 青眼 or 正眼 To point a sword at an opponent's face

⁴ *Iga-bakama* 伊賀袴 A particular style of hakama in which the legs effectively taper below the knees and are tied around the shins. They are conventionally associated with samurai of the Iga domain and also ninja.

⁵ *Hassō* 八双

During their two-hour clash the sun had begun its descent into a thin layer of clouds. Now, as sunset began to light up the lands the body lay completely motionless.

Sukehachi stood up slowly and dragged his exhausted legs over to his fallen opponent. He checked again to make sure that the man was dead and—in keeping with a secret finishing technique—he wiped the blood from his sword with a special paper, before slipping this inside Tonomura's sleeve. The sun broke through rifts in the clouds and its weak autumnal rays shone down upon Tonomura's corpse, illuminating the visible white bone of his wounded shoulder.

Sukehachi also carried wounds—to an upper arm and one of his thighs. Unfastening a sash securing his sleeves, he bound it above the cut on his leg before picking up his coat and setting off home. As he exited the estate through the wicket gate, a man emerged from amongst the shadows. He wore a headband and his sleeves were tied back.

“Have you finished?”

The man spoke in a polite tone, which suggested that he was one of the chief inspectors' subordinates.

“Yes, it's all done.”

“I was worried because the gate shut. After that I heard not a sound from inside. Oh, I see that you are injured.”

“It's all right, I'm just grazed. I'll leave you to tidy up if that's all right,” Sukehachi replied before beginning to head off. With this, the man wished him well and signalled to a regiment of spearmen waiting at the side of the estate. Upon his signal the regiment promptly proceeded to file in through the wicket gate.

As soon as Sukehachi started to walk, his wounds began to throb with pain and fresh blood appeared to ooze out of them. He chose a deserted route

to go home, and as he journeyed the sun disappeared and faint twilight enveloped the town.

I'll get Okane to heat some water ... I have to dress my wounds first, he thought to himself. But he was not sure if he could do it himself. He wondered if he should go and see a doctor first, but he had no idea where a doctor was.

Hatsu would probably know, but then she would have already gone home. Before he left for Tonomura's estate, she had said that she would not be there when he returned, but had promised to pray for his good fortune.

It was only natural that Hatsu wouldn't wait...After all, she was not part of my family, thought Sukehachi. Suddenly he felt his body tighten with an intense sense of loneliness unlike anything he had ever felt. Fighting back the pain he gritted his teeth and continued walking. Fever was making his footsteps waver, but he was oblivious to this.

Finally arriving back in the town where he lived, Sukehachi tried to spot the crude gate of his house. As he did so, he noticed a dark figure on the dimly-lit street in front of the gate. He came to a stop still. Suddenly, he could hear the pattering of wooden clogs as the figure came running towards him. Realising that the pale face belonged to Hatsu, Sukehachi thought that it was merely an illusion.

Summary and Conclusions

As a warrior culture evolved throughout the Heian period and beyond, certain ideals or ethics, including honour and loyalty, came to be associated with the samurai. With the reunification of Japan around the beginning of the seventeenth century, warrior leaders, considering the advocacy of loyalty as being congruent with effective governance, national stability and the survival of the Tokugawa regime, promoted this ideal through law codes and official doctrine at various levels. During the two-and-a-half centuries of relative peace of this ensuing period, the samurai were increasingly transformed from proud warriors into administrators and bureaucrats. Many Confucian scholars in particular were anxious about this civilianisation of the samurai, and espoused ideals such as moral leadership, absolute loyalty, learning and military preparedness. As the Tokugawa period wore on, increasing bureaucratisation and commercialisation gave rise to further anxiety, which was compounded even more so by the increasing threat of foreign intrusion.

Following the Meiji Restoration, ideals of loyalty and sacrifice conventionally associated with the samurai were reconstructed by modern militarists and universalised throughout the population as part of a national process of indoctrination. Bushido and the samurai spirit became inextricably linked with the notion of sacrificing one's life for the emperor and the country. Further to this, Nitobe Inazō's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* popularised the notion that historically the samurai had universally adhered to a single code of ethics termed bushido.

A common image evoked by the samurai today is of a loyal and brave warrior. In contradistinction to the oft-presented glorified picture of the samurai, Fujisawa Shūhei's novellas present a somewhat atypical portrayal. Rather than

a depiction of proud sword wielding warriors, his protagonists display little interest in such a warrior role. They have neither reverence for ideals of loyalty nor an appetite for glory or violence. The main significance of Fujisawa's works, however, is that, despite being set in the Tokugawa period, they appear to criticise certain aspects of postwar Japanese society: the omnipresence of corporate values in the lives of individuals, economic desires and materialism, and concerns for wealth or status. The samurai protagonists within each of Fujisawa's works discussed here are marginal figures, unkempt and low in rank. There is nothing attractive about them and, in fact, they are all seemingly very ordinary. These depictions within the context of the novellas starkly contrast with the expectations and ideals that the protagonists' superiors stand for—authority and ambition.

Within "Twilight Seibei" ("Tasogare Seibei," 1983), Fujisawa criticises the authoritarian nature of corporate Japan by creating a parallel with the omnipotent attitudes and loyalty expectations of the high-ranking samurai officials. The protagonist, although shown to have far greater concern for his family life—his time is taken up with caring for his sick wife and cleaning the house—than for adherence to feudal (corporate) values, is compelled by his superiors to kill another samurai on behalf of the clan (company). A second novella, "Sukehachi the Beggar" ("Hoito Sukehachi," 1988), appears to comment negatively on the prominence of economically-driven values in postwar society. This story was first published amidst Japan's so-called 'economic bubble,' a time when wealth disparities are acknowledged to have heightened. This novella depicts a protagonist who exudes contentment with life and shows little interest in economic reward when commanded by clan officials to kill a dissident samurai. Fujisawa also addresses class

consciousness through his depiction of the status disparity between the protagonist and his late wife, who effectively stood for materialism and had concerns for wealth. The last of the novellas examined, “The Bamboo Sword” (“Takemitsu shimatsu,” 1976), was published amidst the global recession of the 1970s. The novella gloomily assesses the prominence of ability-based performance and competition in Japan’s corporate society, as the protagonist is pitted against another samurai in a bid to secure a permanent posting. Fujisawa highlights the plight of the modern salaryman and his vulnerability in an economic and political system which pays scant regard to the lives of individuals.

In creating his film *The Twilight Samurai* (*Tasogare Seibei*, 2002), Yamada Yōji drew on aspects of all three of Fujisawa’s novellas, and similarly appears to question modern values in Japan. As discussed in Chapter Two, Yamada’s opinions on the state of Japanese society at the turn of the millennium clearly reflect a degree of antipathy towards the course of Japanese modernity. In summary, he suggests that the drive for economic power and competition in the postwar period has had a significantly negative impact on Japanese society, and believes that wealth, competition and material values have become pervasive in people’s lives. These themes are evident within *The Twilight Samurai*. The setting of this film in the *bakumatsu* period seems to have particular significance for Japan at the turn of the millennium: both periods are recognised as being marked by much anxiety and discontent, and an evident awareness of the breakdown of long-existent social structures. In like manner to Fujisawa Shūhei, within *The Twilight Samurai* Yamada highlights the modern corporate work ethic and the inherent tensions that expectations of loyalty and duty present to the individual.

A new issue that Yamada brings to the film, however, is the role of the protagonist as a father figure. This symbolises the restoration of the male in the home and is a disapproving commentary on Japan's modernisation, which has seen many men isolated from their families. Like the protagonists of Fujisawa's works, Yamada's Seibei shows little desire for financial gain or concern for political matters. He is content with his family and is perhaps an antithesis to those in authority, who place importance on reputation and conformity with the system. Despite Seibei's lack of desire to kill, he is forced to concede to domain (company) orders to do so. Yamada also makes an overt criticism of wealth or class disparities, which are recognised as having increased throughout the 1990s. This is evidenced particularly through his depictions of peasant deaths (which did not occur within the original works) and emphasis on status differences. Towards the conclusion of the film, Yamada's portrayal of Seibei's adversary appears as a telling comment on the anxieties faced by salarymen in the wake of the recession since the 1990s, and the realisation that conventional work practices no longer afford them protection. Similarly, Seibei himself became an innocent victim of modernity and the ambition of those in authority.

Taken as a whole, the novellas and the film present the notion that work-based, competitive, and financially ambitious goals play an overriding role within modern Japan. Conversely, the works suggest the importance of holding on to more humane and familial values. Thus, examination of the works of Fujisawa Shūhei and Yamada Yōji within this thesis has revealed that they make a significant critical commentary on changing Japanese values in the postwar period. It is hoped that this examination might facilitate a broader study of the samurai image at the turn of the millennium as Japan continues to experience pronounced social change.

Bibliography

- Batten, Bruce L. "Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From Ritsuryō kokka to Ocho kokka." *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (June 1993): 103–134.
- . "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform: The Emergence of the Ritsuryō State." *Monumenta Nipponica* 41, no. 2 (1986): 199–219.
- Beasley, W G. *The Meiji Restoration*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972.
- Bereens, Anne. "Interview with a Bakumatsu Official: A Translation from Kyūji Shimonroku." *Monumenta Nipponica* 55, no. 3 (2000): 369–398.
- Blomberg, Catharina. *The Heart of the Warrior: Origins and Religious Background of the Samurai System in Feudal Japan*. Kent, UK: Japan Library, 1994.
- Bolitho, Harold. "The Tempō Crisis." In *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. ed. Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1–52.
- Bouissou, Jean-Marie. *Japan: The Burden of Success*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 2002.
- Bowring, Richard. "Mori Ōgai: A Reappraisal." *Journal of the Association of Japanese Teachers* (Sept 1975): 145–157.
- Conlan, Thomas. "Largesse and the Limits of Loyalty in the Fourteenth Century." *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century*. Edited by Jeffrey P. Mass. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, 39–64.
- Croghan, Patrick "Seven Samurai," *Senses of Cinema*, 2000.
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/00/9/seven.html>
 (Accessed 2 April, 2007).

- Curtin, J. Sean. "Japanese Public Opinion on the Second Iraq War: Part 5- Postwar Opinions on the Iraq Conflict," *Glocom Platform*. 29 July 2003. http://www.glocom.org/special_topics/social_trends/20030729_trends_s50/index.html (Accessed April 2007).
- Daidoji Yuzan. *Budoshoshinshu: The Warrior's Primer of Daidoji Yuzan*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. US: Ohara Publications, 2005.
- Eccleston, Bernard. *State and Society in Postwar Japan*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.
- Endō Nobuko. *Chichi: Fujisawa Shūhei to no kurashi (My Father: Life with Fujisawa Shūhei)*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2007.
- Farris, William Wayne. *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Friday, Karl. *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- . *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- . "Bushidō or Bull? A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition." *The History Teacher* 27, no. 3 (1994): 339–349.
- . "Valorous Butchers: The Art of War during the Golden Age of the Samurai." *Japan Forum* 5, no.1 (1993): 1–19.
- Fujisawa Shūhei. "Tasogare Seibei" In *Tasogare Seibei*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002, 9–45. (First published in *Shōsetsu shinchō* magazine, September 1983)
- Fujisawa Shūhei. "Hoito Sukehachi" In *Tasogare Seibei*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002, 281–314. (First published in *Shōsetsu shinchō* magazine, June 1988)
- Fujisawa Shūhei. "The Bamboo Sword." In *The Bamboo Sword and other Samurai Tales*. Translated by Gavin Frew. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005, 7–39. (First published in 1976)

- Gluck, Carol. *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Japan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Gronning, Terje. "Review of Makoto Kumazawa, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace: Labor Movements, Workers, and Managers," *H-Japan, H-Net Reviews*, August, 1997. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=25164875914424> (Accessed 20 April 2007).
- Hackett, Roger F. "The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (*Gunjin Chokuyu*)," In *Kodansha Encyclopaedia of Japan* 5. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983, 279–280.
- Hall, John W. *Government and Local Power in Japan 500-1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- . *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co. Inc, 1970.
- . "Materials for the Study of Local History in Japan." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 20, no. 1/2. (Jun., 1957): 187–212.
- . "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (1974): 30–49.
- Hall, Robert K. (ed), *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949.
- Hanley, Susan B. and Kozo Yamamura. *Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan: 1600-1868*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Harootunian, H. D. "Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought." In *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. Edited by Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 53–143.

- Harootunian, H. D. *Toward Restoration: The Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1970.
- Henshall, Kenneth. *Dimensions of Japanese Society*. Basingstoke: McMillan, 1999.
- Henshall, Kenneth G. *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower* (2nd ed). UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Henshall, Ken with Laurie Barber. "The Not-So Clear Way of the Japanese Warrior: Ambivalent Images, Confusing Realities and Alien Ethics." Unpublished Material.
- Hidaka Rokurō. *The Price of Affluence: Dilemmas of Contemporary Japan*. Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Higuchi, Yoshio. "Economic Disparity in Japanese Society: Fair and Efficient Labour Market is Essential," *Glocom Platform*. 3 October 2005. http://www.glocom.org/opinions/essays/20051003_higuchi_economic/index.html. (Accessed 20 April 2007).
- Howland, Douglas. "Samurai Status, Class and Bureacracy: A Historiographical Essay." *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 2 (May 2001): 353–380.
- Hurst, G. Cameron III. "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal." *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 4 (1990): 511–527.
- . "Minamoto Family." In *Kodansha Encyclopaedia of Japan*, Vol. 5. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983, 176–177.
- . "The Warrior as an Ideal for a New Age." In *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerks, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century*. Edited by Jeffrey P. Mass. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, 208–233.
- Iida, Yumiko. *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan*. London: Routledge, 2002.

- Ikegami, Eiko. *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Ishii Susumu. "The Formation of Bushi Bands (Bushidan)." *Acta Asiatica* 49. (1985): 1–14.
- Jansen, Marius B. "Preface." In *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. Edited by Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . "The Meiji Restoration." In *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. Edited by Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Japan Times*. "Showing Samurai as they are." 16 March 2003.
- Japan Times*. "A Vanishing Middle Class: Rising Income Disparities in Japan." 4 January 2006
- Kassell, Marleen. *Tokugawa Confucian Education: The Kangien Academy of Hirose Tansō (1782–1856)*. Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996.
- Kingston, Jeff. *Japan's Quiet Transformation: Social Change and Civil Society in the Twenty-first Century*. London; NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Kiridōshi Risaku. *Yamada Yōji no sekai*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2004
- Kodansha Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3. "Gundai" Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983, 68.
- Kohama Itsuo and Yamaori Tetsuo. "Ima, naze Fujisawa Shūhei na no ka?" ("Why Fujisawa Shūhei is Beneficial Today") In *Fujisawa Shūhei ni manabu (Learning From Fujisawa Shūhei)*. Edited by Gekkan 'Bōsei' Henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōkai kyōiku kenkyūjo, 2006, 9–24.
- Koschmann, J Victor. *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790–1864*. Berkley and Los Angeles: CA, University of California Press, 1987.

- Kōzu Kunio, *Tasogare Seibei no ningenzō: Fujisawa Shūhei–Yamada Yōji no sakuhin sekai (Images of Human Beings in Tasogare Seibei: The Worlds of Yamada Yōji and Fujisawa Shūhei)*. Tokyo: Kadensha, 2004.
- Kumazawa Makoto, *Portraits of the Japanese Workplace: Labour Movements, Workers, and Managers*. Translated by Andrew Gordon and Mikiso Hane. COL: Westview Press, 1996.
- Lincoln, James R. and Arne L. Kalleberg. *Culture, Control, and Commitment: A Study of Work Organisation and Work Attitudes in the United States and Japan*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- McCormack, Gavin. *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence*, NY: M.E. Sharp Inc., 1996.
- McMullen, I J. “Rulers or Fathers? A Casuistical Problem in Early Modern Japanese Thought.” *Past and Present* 116 (Aug 1987): 56–97.
- Maegaki (Foreword). “Kono jidai ni koso hitsuyōna Fujisawa Shūhei” (“*The Necessity of Fujisawa Shūhei to Life Today*”). In *Fujisawa Shūhei ni manabu* (Learning From Fujisawa Shūhei), Edited by Gekkan ‘Bōsei’ Henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōkai kyōiku kenkyūjo, 2006, 4–5.
- Miyazawa Kentarō. “Fujisawa Shūhei no kindai to hankindai” (“Fujisawa Shūhei: Modernity and Anti-modernity”). *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 72, no. 2 (2007): 17–20.
- Moore, Ray A. “Samurai Discontent and Social Mobility in the Late Tokugawa Period.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 24, no. 1–2 (1969): 79–91.
- Mori Ōgai. “Okitsu Yagoemon no isho.” Translated by Richard Bowring. In *The Incident at Sakai and Other Stories: Volume 1 of the Historical Literature of Mori Ōgai*. Edited by David Dilworth and Thomas J Rimer. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1977.
- . “Abe Ichizoku.” Translated by Richard Bowring. In *The Incident at Sakai and Other Stories: Volume 1 of the Historical Literature of Mori Ōgai*. Edited by David Dilworth and Thomas J Rimer. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1977.

- Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*. London; NY: Routledge/Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies, 1989.
- Mouer, Ross and Hirosuke Kawanishi. *A Sociology of Work in Japan*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Muranaka Kenji, “Intabyū: Yamada Yōji” (*Interview with Yamada Yōji*) In *Bessatsu Takarajima 964 (Fujisawa Shūhei: Katsute no Nihonjin no kiyoi aikan moyō)*. Tokyo: Takarajimasha, (2007): 2-7.
- Najita, Tetsuo. *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
- Nitobe Inazō. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan: An Exposition of Japanese Thought*. Rutland, Vermont; Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company Inc, 1969. (Originally published 1905).
- Nosco, Peter. *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth Century Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990.
- Okaniwa Noboru, “‘Aku’ no egakikata ni miru Fujisawa Shūhei no kosei to ‘jōai’” (“The Portrayal of ‘Evil’ in the Individuality and ‘Affection’ of Fujisawa Shūhei”). In *Fujisawa Shūhei ni manabu (Learning From Fujisawa Shūhei)*. Edited by Gekkan “Bōsei” Henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōkai kyōiku kenkyūjo, 2006, 129–132.
- Ooms, Herman. *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- . “Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem.” In *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*. Edited by Peter Nosco. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997. 27–61.
- Ozaki Hotsuki, *Taishū bungaku no rekishi (A History of Popular Literature)*, vol 2. Sengo hen. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1989.
- Rabinovitch, Judith N. *Shōmonki : The Story of Masakado's Rebellion..* Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, Sophia University, 1986.

- Ravina, Mark. *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Richie, Donald. *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film: A Concise History with a Selective Guide to Videos and DVDs*. Tokyo; NY: Kodansha International, 2005.
- . *Japanese Cinema: Film Style and National Character*. LON: Secker and Walberg, 1971.
- Roberts, Glenda S. “Aging Japan’s Urban Landscape.” In *Family and Social Policy in Japan: Anthropological Approaches*. Edited by Roger Goodman. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Sankei Shinbun*. “‘Tasogare Seibei’ kuranku–appu: Yamada Yōji kantoku ga jidaigeki chōsen.” 8 June 2002.
- Silver, Alain. *The Samurai Film: Expanded and Revised Edition*. Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 2005.
- Steenstrup, Carl. “The Imagawa Letter: A Muromachi Warrior’s Code of Conduct Which Became a Tokugawa Schoolbook.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 28, no. 3. (1973): 295–316.
- Tachibanaki Toshiaki, *Confronting Income Inequality in Japan*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2005.
- Takahashi Toshio. *Fujisawa to iu ikikata (Fujisawa Shūhei’s Way of Life)*. Tokyo: PHP kenkyūjo, 2007.
- Takeuchi Rizō. “Bushī no tōjō” (*Rise of the Bushi*), *Nihon no rekishi* vol. 6. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 2004.
- . “Nara Jidai.” *Eigo de yomu Nihonshi = Japanese History: 11 Experts Reflect on the Past*, Tokyo: Kōdansha intānashonarū, 2006. 32–43.
- . “The Rise of the Warriors.” In *Heian Japan*. Edited by Donald H. Shively and William H. McCullough. *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 2*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

- Takeda Hiroko, *The Political Economy of Reproduction in Japan: Between Nation–State and Everyday Life*. LON: Routledge/Curzon, 2005.
- Tipton, Elise K. *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*. LON: Routledge, 2002.
- Torao Toshiya., “Nara Economic and Social Institutions.” In *Medieval Japan*. Edited by Delmer M. Brown. *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 1*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 415–52.
- Totman, Conrad. *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu: 1600-1843*. Cambridge, MAS: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Tsunoda, R, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene. Comp. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Turnbull, Stephen. *The Samurai: A Military History*. Surrey, UK: Japan Library, 1996.
- The Twilight Samurai (Tasogare Seibei)*. DVD. Directed by Yamada Yōji. Eastern Eye, 2003 (Original film release, Japan: Shochiku Films, 2002).
- Uchihashi Katsuto. “The Lost ‘Human Country’.” *Japan Focus*, 2005.
<http://www.japanfocus.org/products/details/1801> (Accessed April 2007).
- Vaporis, Constantine. “To Edo and Back: Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Modern Period.” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 23. no. 1 (Winter, 1997): 25–67.
- Varley, Paul. *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.
- Vlastos, Stephen. *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*. CA and LON: University of California Press, 1986.
- Wilson, George M. “Plots and Motives in Japan’s Meiji Restoration.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 3. (1983): 407–427.

- Yamada Yōji, “Ningen no seijuku ni kakawaru ‘jinsei no jūshokukan’” (“A Sense of ‘Fulfillment in Life’ through Human Maturity”). In *Fujisawa Shūhei ni manabu* (Learning From Fujisawa Shūhei). Edited by Gekkan ‘Bōsei’ Henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōkai kyōiku kenkyūjo, 2006, 26–32.
- Yamamoto Ichiriki. “Wakimae wo shitte ikinaosu gokochi yosa” (“Understanding ‘Discernment’ and Renewing Pleasure in Life”). In *Fujisawa Shūhei ni manabu* (Learning From Fujisawa Shūhei). Edited by Gekkan “Bōsei” Henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōkai kyōiku kenkyūjo, 2006, 172–180.
- Yamamoto Tsunetomo. *Hagakure: The Book of Samurai*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1979.
- Yamamura, Kozo. “The Increasing Poverty of Samurai in Tokugawa Japan, 1600-1868.” *The Journal of Economic History* 31, no. 2. (1971): 378–406.
- Yamashita, Samuel H. “Nature and Artifice in the Writings of Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728).” In *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*. Edited by Peter Nosco. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, 138–165.
- Yoda, Tomiko. “A Roadmap to Millennial Japan.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no 4. (2000): 629–668.
- . “The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labour, and Capital in Contemporary Japan.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no 4. (2000): 865–902.
- Yoshimura Hideo, *Yamada Yōji X Fujisawa Shūhei* (Yamada Yōji and Fujisawa Shūhei). Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 2004.